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THE NEW

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The Week-end Review

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THE NEW STATESMAN AND NATION—The Week-end Review. *Incorporating The New Statesman, The Nation and Athenaeum, Week-end Review.*

THE Foreign Office efforts to preserve British interests in the Mediterranean without quarrelling with Italy have taken the unusual form of a correspondence between the Prime Minister and the Duce. The last attempt was the Mediterranean pact of January 20th, in which Mussolini made a number of promises including, we understand, the moderation of Italy's ceaseless wireless attacks on the British Empire. On most points the pact proved meaningless, and Italian troops landed in Spain on the day it was signed. In the present correspondence Spain is presumably once more omitted from the proposed settlement; and it may be that Mussolini's request for the recognition of Abyssinia will not be formally mentioned either. But what all these discussions amount to is that Britain will not oppose Italy's aggression, as long as the Duce respects British interests. Italian air bases in the Balearics, for instance, are important. The situation is very much like that before the Laval-Hoare proposals, with this advantage from the Government's point of view—that, the League having been evaded this time, there is far less danger of any imperial agreement being upset by a public clamour about some issue of past pledges or other irrelevant question of right and wrong.

Non-Intervention

The essence of the last British non-intervention plan was that it offered recognition of Franco when the Committee was satisfied that there had been a "substantial" withdrawal of foreign troops from Spain. This, as we pointed out at the time, gave unlimited chance of haggling. M. Maisky, the Soviet representative, aware that "substantial" in Italian hands might mean nothing, insisted on no recognition without complete withdrawal. The Quai d'Orsay, now even more than ever under the influence of the Foreign Office, seems to have attempted to modify the Russian attitude and was reported, apparently wrongly, to have succeeded. The British view is fairly clear—Britain would prefer enough withdrawal to save her face, but is quite ready to please Italy and Germany by recognising Franco, provided they will not upset Britain's position in the Mediterranean. Realising the danger, the Labour Party published a forcible statement on the Spanish issue last week and tried to get a pledge from Mr. Eden that Franco should not be recognised during the recess and without consent of Parliament. Mr. Eden would give no such pledge.

The Problem for Nanking

Both sides in the Sino-Japanese conflict seem to be pausing, uncertain whether the local fighting will develop into a major war. Neither has risked any general attack,

yet both in their uncertainty are preparing for the worse event. The Japanese are withdrawing their residents from many cities in the southern provinces. Chinese armies, on the other hand, are converging on Peking. If they fight there, the convention that this is a local conflict would not necessarily be broken. Indeed, it may suit the Japanese to have an excuse to continue their advance in this region, for as yet they have occupied only the northern half of the vast Hopei province and they may want it all. More especially they may want the strategically vital railway junction of Pao-ting-fu. The Nanking Government, it seems to us, has nothing to gain and much to lose by generalising the war. Nowhere can it retaliate on the Japanese, save by chasing their traders from its territory, and even this temptation grows daily less attractive. Marshal Chiang Kai-shek might have been driven into reckless courses if he had been confronted by a bellicose Communist opposition. But Moscow certainly desires peace, and one assumes that the Chinese Communists will conform their conduct to its interests. On this reasoning the decision lies with Japan. But why should Japan widen the area of conflict if she can win her battle in the North without costly diversions in other regions which might arouse the somnolent Western Powers?

Retrenchment in France

Financially, the strain in France has temporarily been eased. Bank rate has been reduced to 4 per cent., and with tourist expenditure at its seasonal peak there has been little difficulty in keeping the franc exchange stable at a fraction over 132 to the pound. Publication of the details of M. Bonnet's economy plans reveals a decided reversal of expansionist policies. The maximum of authorised borrowing by Government Departments this year is reduced by Frs. 6 milliards, involving a cut of about Frs. 2½ milliards in public works expenditure. For next year total borrowing of Frs. 47 milliards had been contemplated by M. Blum, including the railway deficit and the Ordinary Budget deficit of Frs. 8 milliards. The Budget deficit and Frs. 2½ milliards of the railway deficit is met by increased taxes and fares. Economies—in public works, on the railways and in grants to local authorities—are to wipe out Frs. 14½ milliards, leaving Frs. 22 milliards uncovered by receipts. Even if M. Bonnet's estimates of tax yields are realised and the apple-cart not overturned by rising prices, a final deficit of £170 millions (at current rates) is a long way from equilibrium. But, even so, an axe which is to lop off expenditure to the tune of over £100 millions will not be popular, and M. Jouhaux has warned his followers that if public works are limited next year, as seems probable, to under Frs. 3 milliards, unemployment may seriously increase.

The Serbian Dictatorship

Nothing has happened during the past week to slacken the tension between Government and people in Belgrade, nor is it easy to guess what could achieve this result, save the slow lapse of time. The mass of the Serb people, always intensely nationalist, had many reasons for disliking the Concordat concluded by Dr. Stoyadinovitch with the Vatican. First, the Vatican itself is regarded as the tool of Italian policy, and the question of Italy's complicity with King Alexander's murder has never been cleared up. Here, then, was a further proof that Yugo-Slavia, since that event, has been adjusted to the Rome-Berlin axis. Every footprint points that way—the new trade relations with Germany, the recent coolness towards Prague, the new friendliness of Hungary, and now this extremely favourable bargain with (as the Serbs see it) Italy's Church. Favourable it certainly was, for it bound the State to enforce the claim of Rome to all children born of mixed marriages. Orthodox sentiment resented also the description of the Church as Catholic instead of Roman-Catholic. The quarrel became irreconcilable when the police, under the Catholic and Slovene Minister of the Interior, Father Koroshetz, used their bayonets on orderly protesting processions. Finally, when the Patriarch died at the height of the crisis, it was widely believed that he had been poisoned. The Government, now under a ban of excommunication, still has its majority in the rump of a packed parliament, but it can claim no popular support. On this issue it has against it not only the Orthodox Serbs but also the Catholic Croats, who fear that it is buying their Church to betray them.

The League and Palestine

In the matter of Palestine the Permanent Mandates Commission has been taking itself seriously. Having heard an exposition from Mr. Ormsby-Gore of the virtues of partition—a plan which Parliament has not yet endorsed—the Commission has settled down to a laborious investigation of past history. It is inquiring, as it is entitled to do, whether the mandate as provided in 1922 was unworkable from the first, or whether intervening circumstances not then foreseen render its modification necessary. It wants to know more about the 1936 disturbances, and whether adequate force was employed to repress them. It is examining "Revisionist" allegations that the whole trouble arises from the hostility of the Palestine Administration to the idea of a Jewish Nationalist Home. In short, the Mandatory Power has been put on trial and the embarrassed Colonial Secretary subjected to an uncomfortable cross-examination. The indignation of Tory Imperialists—to say nothing of the isolationist press—at this inquisition is not unamusing; but unfortunately there seems little chance of the Mandates Commission arriving at any very constructive conclusion. Incidentally, Zionists will be very ill-advised if they try to make capital out of the Commission's critical attitude to Britain's exercise of her mandate. Parliament's temper is not anti-Semitic, but that solid Conservative majority is made up of men impatient of criticism from abroad.

The Condition of England

In his preface to the Annual Report of the Ministry of Health, published this week, Sir Kingsley Wood makes a bold claim. "English men and women," he declares, "and more particularly English children, enjoy a healthier and fuller life than at any time since the Industrial Revolution." The reader of the Report, which contains as usual a mass of informative data on the condition of England, may well feel inclined to retort: "So much the worse for the Industrial Revolution." The Minister of Health is not merely the head of the Department of State which touches most closely the lives of the people of this country; he is also a member of a party Government in office. The satisfaction with which Sir Kingsley points

to the decline in the death rate since 1919 from 13.0 to 9.2 per thousand, the health and pensions services which surround the working-class citizen from cradle to grave, the " steady and sustained " progress of rehousing and slum clearance, is not fully borne out by some of the figures in the Report. Here and there disconcerting evidence that Utopia has not been reached emerges. Maternal mortality remains " obstinately static " ; consumption of milk is 40 per cent. below the level desirable for adequate nutrition ; out of nine million dwellings inspected in 1935, 340,000 were judged (by a very low standard) to be over-crowded, and a further 380,000 to be on the margin. There is much that is good in the Report, but certainly no grounds for complacency.

Compulsory Insurance

The Committee on compulsory insurance has now reported. If the Government act on the report it will prove to be the most important document on the management of insurance companies since the Act of 1909. The problem itself is twofold : (*a*) how to make certain that the insurer who is authorised to accept the compulsory risks (i.e., third party motor claims and miners' compensation) can be made 100 per cent. secure, and (*b*) how to prevent the innocent third party from suffering a loss through some condition in the motorist's policy or through the motorist's failure to insure. The first point is met by a proposal that in future all insurance companies and mutual associations which transact " compulsory " business should be licensed, and that this licence should depend, not on the amount of assets deposited with the Board of Trade, but on an annual certificate of solvency which will be provided by a standing committee, chosen by the industry itself. If this plan is adopted there will in a very short time be an end to insolvent insurance companies, but, should a company fail, the third party will have a claim against a central fund to which the insurance companies themselves will have to contribute. Mutual associations will not only have to be licensed, but will have to make returns from which they are now free. The second problem is dealt with by recommending that only certain conditions should be allowed to have effect in motor policies and that a third party who is let down by one of these conditions or by a motorist's failure to insure shall have recourse to a central fund fed by the companies. The recommendations under both heads are sound.

Aid for British Films

In its plans, now announced, for amending the 1927 Films Act, the Government has not had the courage of the Moyne Committee's convictions. The quota system, as expected, is to be prolonged, with gradually increasing British percentages, and a welcome innovation is the establishment of a separate quota for short films. But there is to be no independent Films Commission and the evil of the " quota quickie " is to be eliminated, not by a quality test administered by the Commission, but by the dubious expedient of a cost test. Any film on which £1 per foot and a total of £7,500 has been spent on the " labour " of British subjects will qualify for quota ; and a film whose costs are treble will count twice its length for quota purposes. Protection denied to the cheap, good film is guaranteed to the dear and bad. True, the producer of a film whose " labour costs " have not reached £7,500 may apply to have it registered for quota on the ground of its " special entertainment value " ; but, unless the judges are to be independent of the interests controlling the trade, this proviso is of little value. An experiment on lines of reciprocity with the U.S.A. is to be made, in that foreign-controlled distributors who market a British film abroad will be proportionately relieved of their obligation to distribute a percentage of British films in this country. This may improve the quality of British films, but it will tend to reduce their quantity—to the disadvantage of the independent exhibitors.

The Milk Racket

The Government's declaration of policy with regard to milk is still unsatisfactory. The one hopeful proposal before the Cabinet was that the power to fix prices should be transferred from Marketing Boards controlled by the producers to an independent Milk Commission. The farmers' organisations and the big distributing combines objected, and the Government has yielded to their objections. A Milk Commission is to be set up, but its functions are to be limited to " reviewing " and " recommending." It will have no powers at all. For the rest, the taxpayer is to contribute still more to the finances of the milk industry. The Treasury will meet part of the cost of premiums payable for superior grades of milk ; and if the prices of imported butter and cheese fall below a stated level, a subsidy will be paid on milk sold for manufacturing purposes. Schemes for securing cheaper milk for maternity and child-welfare centres receives a general blessing, and there is a vague promise of action to " improve " retail distribution. But nothing is to be done to remedy the root evil—that liquid milk prices are maintained at a level beyond poor consumers' reach, in order that manufacturing users may buy at less than the cost of production. This preposterous situation is perpetuated.

The National Theatre

After many years of patient, if reposeful, incubation, the Committee of the National Theatre has at last expended its energy, and a part of its funds, upon the purchase of a site in South Kensington. Whether this is a very felicitous situation for our Comédie Française or Burgtheater it is now too late to discuss with profit. But we venture to hope that the Committee will continue for some while to show the wise inertia they have displayed in the past. With the cost of building growing rapidly higher, and likely to remain high for at least two years, this is an inappropriate moment for the laying of foundation stones. Moreover, while the Committee has been sitting broodily upon its golden egg, the spirited management of the Vic-Wells has gone far towards supplying, in all but name, a National Theatre. It seems to us regrettable that the Trust Deeds of the National Theatre were not varied by Act of Parliament and the fund made available to the Vic-Wells. Is it too late to hope that when a theatre is built on the new site it may be placed under the management of the Vic-Wells ? With additional resources and a third theatre, this body would be able to give us the plays, operas and ballets we require far more surely and effectively than any new organisation.

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THE PEOPLE'S POCKET

IT would be ironical if a Government which has succeeded without let or hindrance in sabotaging collective security and embarking on a feverish race towards war-preparedness should fall from grace in the eyes of the electorate through failure to prevent a shrinkage in the purchasing power of the people's shillings and pence. Yet such may yet be the case. Wholesale prices, whose abnormal depression was a feature of the world slump of 1930–32, have been "reflated" by depreciation of currencies and the policy of creating ample supplies of cheap credit. Inevitably the cost of living is beginning to follow suit. Marginal incomes are already being pinched by rising prices, and the consumer of modest means, grown accustomed to the "buyer's market" of 1931–35, is commencing to grumble. Electorally the development holds dangers for the Government; and the greater the obscurity enveloping their policy with regard to the price level, the less content will be electors whose pockets are touched.

The Parliamentary debate on the question, just before the recess, suggests that the habitual opportunism of Mr. Chamberlain and his colleagues does not include any considered view of long-range price policy at all. That the Cabinet is sensitive to attack on the ground that the cost of life's necessities is rising was demonstrated by the insistence with which the President of the Board of Trade argued, truly enough, that the upward movement is world-wide and, less convincingly, that Protection has had little influence on the sterling price level. So far, declared Mr. Stanley, the rise in commodity prices has been "a healthy thing for the industry of the country"; it has revived the purchasing power of primary producers in overseas countries, to the benefit of our export trades, and should be regarded, in fact, as an essential concomitant of economic recovery. What would be done when the rise in prices had reached the limit of its effectiveness as a stimulant to industry and begun to involve the frictions and social injustices of inflation? That stage had not been reached; there were still commodities whose price did not represent "a reasonable return" to the producer. The Government's objective would be to secure a reasonable return to every producer, but at the same time it would see that there are "no abnormal or fearful increases in the general cost of living." With this hopeful, if vague, declaration of dual and scarcely compatible aims the House had to rest content; but both producers and consumers are entitled to know more. What is a "reasonable" return? When does a rise in living costs become "fearful," and is the hypothetical emotion that of a family with £1,000 a year or that of a household living on 50 shillings, or less, a week?

The debate was initiated by Mr. David Grenfell, who submitted that recent increases in wages had quite failed to keep pace with the rising cost of living. Since 1933 the cost of living index had risen by 12½ per cent., which represented, in his estimation, an addition of at least £155,000,000 a year to working-class expenditure, whereas the corresponding increment to working-class income through wage advances had been no more than £50,000,000 a year. The accuracy of Mr. Grenfell's income computation is doubtful: rates of wages per hour do not tell the whole story, and allowance must be made for fuller employment of households and the elimination of "short time" in any estimate of real working-class earnings. Moreover, in choosing as his datum level a year of abnormal depression of prices, he exaggerated, for the purpose of his argument, the real strength of the case. The facts are that in relation to 1929—the last more or less "normal" year of the pre-slump period—wage rates, apart altogether from fuller employment, are to-day on the average at least 2 per cent. up, and the cost of living still 5 per cent. down.

This, however, by no means disposes of a problem to which Mr. Grenfell rightly drew attention. The cost of living, measured with scant accuracy by the existing obsolete official index number, is rising sharply. In relation to the level of many money incomes it is already high, and leaves little margin for any further advance. Coal-miners, with an average income of £130 a year—to say nothing of the still less fortunate members of the community subsisting on Unemployment Assistance Board allowances—might be pardoned if they regarded a further 10 per cent. rise in living costs as something "fearful," no matter how conducive it might be to the health of profit-making industry. Nearly 10,000,000 people in this country, as Mr. Graham White pointed out in the debate, at present spend 6*s.* or less per week on food, as compared with the B.M.A.'s estimate that 7*s.* is the minimum required for reasonable physical existence. For these people the past year's increase of 2*s.* in the pound on the cost of essential foods has meant serious deprivation; a further 10 per cent. increase would be physically ruinous.

Yet that is the prospect which stares them in the face. Between movements of wholesale and retail prices there is always a time-lag. Since the nadir of the world depression wholesale prices have risen by roughly 40 per cent., retail prices by less than 15 per cent. Making due allowance for the more or less rigid elements—distribution costs and other overheads—in the retail price structure, there is no doubt but that the present gap between the two percentage increases will rapidly be narrowed by shop prices moving up.

It is idle for the Government to declare that "abnormal and fearful" increases in living costs will in no case be permitted. What means to prevent them have they in mind? Elimination of uneconomic middleman's costs? In the course of last week's debate, the Member for Frome instanced the case of pigs which brought in £4 11*s.* 1*d.* a head to the Wiltshire farmer and were retailed (in joints and rashers) by Harrods for £8 19*s.* 1*d.* There is no proof that Harrods are "profiteering," or that other similar examples which might be adduced of the wide spread between primary and ultimate prices point to particularly exorbitant profit-margins. The cost to the consumer of distribution and retailer's "service" is high, undoubtedly. But it is futile to expect it to be appreciably lowered by any Government which accepts as axiomatic the economic conventions of a capitalist society.

From this analysis two salient conclusions result. First, as a short-term policy, the country must recognise that, in face of an increase in living costs whose progress is already substantial and is likely to go much farther, wage advances on a substantial scale will have to be conceded, and there will have to be corresponding

readjustments of unemployment benefit, U.A.B. scales of assistance and kindred distributions to those on the poverty line. Humanitarian considerations apart, it is essential, if industrial activity is to be sustained, that mass purchasing power should not fall behind a rising price level.

Secondly, from a longer range point of view, the Government must make up its mind what level of wholesale prices is to be regarded, and defined in advance, as a desirable level at which to stabilise, so far as is possible, the progress of "reflation." At present, wholesale prices have nearly re-attained the level of 1929. This degree of recovery, according to Mr. Stanley, is insufficient, since some primary producers are still not enjoying a "reasonable return." What will suffice? A level 10 per cent., or 50 per cent., above that of 1929? The Government's notions are impenetrable, and there is no indication that they have begun to consider the technique appropriate for checking a rise of prices which begins to assume the characteristics of inflation.

They are committed to a rearmament programme whose demands on "heavy" industry are accentuating the rising tendency of prices but whose financing depends on the maintenance of "easy money" and relative low rates of interest. They have no desire to see an inflationary spiral of prices developing, but their precarious budgetary equilibrium and the need to place further *tranches* of National Defence Bonds preclude the possibility of active steps to check rising prices by contraction of banking credit. The latent capacity of the country to produce more is still far from exhaustion, and inflation is therefore not yet imminent, but the upper limit of rising prices requires to be defined. Otherwise the danger exists that a baseless price boom will once again gather momentum and, in the absence of a definite declaration of price policy by the Government, collapse once more in the ruins of unsubstantial paper wealth.

THE FUTURE OF DIVORCE

THE last half-hour's time available on the parliamentary stage, before the curtain was rung down for the recess, was occupied to advantage by Mr. Clem Davies, K.C., in pleading for less dilatory judicial procedure. He was concerned notably with the King's Bench Division, in which the number of Judges has risen only from 14 to 18 in the past 100 years, a period in which there has been a three-fold increase of population. Attendance at Assize, he said, made heavy demands on the time of Judges: during July there had been only five available in London, including those occupied with special work, and over 200 cases set down for trial before April would have to be carried over the two and a half months' vacation to the Michaelmas Term, unheard. The State rightly claimed the monopoly of justice, but possession of a monopoly required that it should be exercised without expensive and vexatious delays.

With this plea litigants will unanimously agree. Little or nothing has yet been done to implement even the mild reforms recommended by the Peel Commission over a year ago with a view to accelerating procedure, and the King's Bench Division is notoriously under-staffed with Judges. But Mr. Davies would have been voicing the complaint of still more numerous victims of the law's delays if he had gone on to call attention to the condition of affairs in the Divorce Court. Here congestion is acute. The Term has ended with over 750 suits unheard, of which a large number were brought forward from the Easter Term and not a few represent petitions filed long before Christmas. That something like fifteen to eighteen months should have to elapse, as is now the case, between the filing of a petition and the grant of a decree absolute is unfair to matrimonial litigants and injurious to social morals. The prospect, moreover, now that the Matrimonial Causes Act is law, is that the existing congestion will be seriously intensified. Indeed, unless steps are taken to increase substantially the number of Judges available for the hearing of matrimonial suits, there is a real danger of the machinery of the Divorce Court completely breaking down.

In the first place, it may be taken for granted that the widening of the grounds for dissolution of marriage provided for in the Act will lead to a considerable increase in the number of suits. Apart from insanity, in whose case the augmentation of trials will be large at first but not permanently important, desertion will indisputably swell greatly the list of undefended suits, while cruelty—a charge which few respondents would care to let go by default—will tend to increase the number of defended suits requiring a more or less protracted hearing.

Secondly, and still more productive of delay, the time spent in disposing of each undefended action is bound to be much enlarged by the fact that under the new Act the Court is required specifically to satisfy itself that the petitioner in undefended suits has established that there has been no collusion with the respondent. Judges will doubtless vary in their interpretation of the task thus imposed on them of exacting proof of a negative; and it remains to be seen what sort of evidence will in practice be demanded. In cases where any shadow of doubt arises it would appear probable that the hearing may often have to be adjourned in order to secure the respondent's presence in the witness-box. In every case there must obviously be fairly extensive questioning of the petitioner. If the new Act is strictly interpreted, the days of the "three minute" divorce case are gone.

This being so, it is of urgent social importance not merely that more Judges should be appointed but that the State should consider carefully what is meant, or rather ought to be meant, by "collusion." The Act which Mr. A. P. Herbert's efforts have carried to the statute book cannot be regarded as the final word in the rational treatment of marriages which have broken down. In the matter of collusion its provisions, as we have seen, will aggravate the congestion in the Court; and unless Judges are empowered by an Amending Act to take a different view of collusion from that now accepted, cases of serious hardship and injustice will arise.

Fears in this respect are strengthened by the judgment delivered last week by Mr. Justice Langton in the case of Woods *v.* Woods (Martin intervening and showing cause). In June, 1935, Mrs. Woods obtained a decree *nisi* against Mr. Woods on the ground of his adultery at a London hotel with a woman named "Edith Matthews." The suit was undefended. Eight months later Miss Martin appeared in the case as a member of the public "showing cause" why the decree should not be made absolute. She alleged that she was "Edith Matthews"; that she had stayed with the respondent at an hotel in order to furnish "divorce evidence," but that no act of adultery had been committed; and that the case had been collusive in that the respondent had paid the petitioner a sum of money in consideration of her suing for divorce. Both the petitioner and the respondent denied the allegations, and the question was raised whether a woman named in a petition could subsequently intervene as a member of the public. In June, 1936, Mr. Justice Bucknill held that Miss Martin was entitled to intervene and, after a year's delay, the recent hearing followed.

In his judgment, Mr. Justice Langton found that Miss Martin failed to establish that she had not committed adultery with Mr. Woods on the occasion named, and on this count he ruled "in favour" (*sic*) of Mr. Woods. On the other hand, he decided that there was proof that Mr. Woods had helped his wife financially to purchase a house at the time she filed her petition, and that this assistance represented in fact

financial pressure to induce her to take proceedings. He held, therefore, that collusion was established and that the decree *nisi* must be rescinded; and he passed severe strictures on Mr. Woods (a solicitor by profession) and the firm of solicitors acting on his behalf for the parts played by them in a suit of a "glaringly collusive" character, to which even Mrs. Wood's solicitors had "firmly and deliberately closed their eyes."

In this remarkable case the morals and motives of the parties concerned are not of public interest. The reasons which induced Mr. Woods to desire his wife to divorce him, and Miss Martin first to lend her aid and then to "blow the gaff" are irrelevant. One may agree or not with the Judge's view of the professional standards incumbent in such cases on solicitors. The evidence furnished to the petitioner was admittedly a "put-up job"; but so it is in nine cases out of ten. In the motor-car age few "guilty parties" of comfortable means are ever "found out" unless they want to be. One may sympathise with this or that party to the suit; one may be filled with nausea at the indecency of a law which invites such manoeuvres and suppression of facts. What is of greater public importance is that Mr. and Mrs. Woods are still tied legally together in a marriage which one at least of them desires to terminate for the simple reason that Mr. Woods did something which may, or may not, have been morally "unfair" pressure in this particular case, but would be in many cases the only equitable basis on which a shipwrecked marriage could be dissolved.

Mr. Woods helped his wife to buy a house. Mrs. Woods admitted that she regarded the house as "part of her future security." And why not? For the greater part of the population of this country marriage is not a "sacrament" but a convenient civil contract, one of whose implications is that a wife should not be left financially stranded by the other party to the contract. In cases where the respondent is the husband, it is inevitable that the question of alimony for the wife who is asked to terminate the contract should be discussed. How far it is "fair" that a wife without financial means of her own should be persuaded against her wishes to relinquish legal possession of her husband for a monetary consideration is doubtless arguable; but so is the question whether it is "fair" that one party to a marriage should deny the other freedom from it except in return for a settlement which may be excessive. The point of substance is that some financial understanding is almost invariably reached, despite Mr. Justice Langton's strictures on "bought divorces"; and if this is to be regarded under the new Act as collusion, the possibilities of "holy deadlock" in matrimonial cases are indefinitely and deplorably extended.

The only solution which seems capable of attainment by this perplexed generation, having regard to the weight of uncompromising clerical opposition to divorce by mutual consent, is to differentiate completely between civil marriage and marriage by the Church. Those who elect to undergo the latter may always feel it appropriate that grounds for dissolution should be severely circumscribed and that the fiction should be preserved that petitioners for divorce are bringing reluctant respondents, who have failed to conceal their guilt, before the bar of justice. Others, less interested in ecclesiastical ceremony but more concerned with honesty and realism in matrimonial relations, might then be spared the ignominious and indecent pretences with which the process of ending a marriage contract is still attended.

A LONDON DIARY

MUCH struck by the newspaper reports of the terrible things these Basque children do (the *Telegraph* reports that English girls had their hair pulled by Basques the other day), I have been making inquiries about the whole subject. Ought they to be immediately repatriated as friends of Franco say? The case on grounds of morals and damage is not really as convincing as they suggest. All the claims by local residents for damage do not amount to more than a few pounds: most of the trouble seems to have arisen from a shortage of supervisors who could talk Spanish. In order no doubt to make things easier Sir Samuel Hoare has just refused to allow Spaniards in France to come over for the purpose of helping in the camps. The record of the Committee really seems quite creditable to me. Only two children have died of tuberculosis (contracted before they came to this country), eighteen tough boys have gone to France (where they are presumably less sensitive); one child has gone back to Vigo when it was known that the parents could look after it. Mr. Eden, I understand, has admitted in correspondence that conditions in Bilbao are not yet safe enough for the return of the rest of the children—who number, it is sometimes forgotten, 3,805 mainly quite normal children whom, I should have thought, any decent English man or woman would gladly welcome here.

* * *

But then how little I understand the minds of the British upper class! Having heard the other day of an argument in the remote hamlet of Spuffle, where some Basque children are housed, I wrote for information and was rewarded with the following letter from a gentleman, or perhaps a lady, who seems fully cognisant of the facts. The letter reads as follows, capitals and italics being his (or her) own:

> Here in Spuffle we are Right minded; we uphold the State; we know that anarchism, bolshevism, communism and socialism are so many names for the views that Moscow seeks to introduce into the body politic with a hypodermic syringe of Gold.
>
> Let me repeat that, being Right minded, we endeavour to be worthy of our King, our country and our glorious Constitution.
>
> A little while ago one of our energetic local committees was planning an outing for the school children, an annual example of our kindness to the deserving poor. As ill fortune will have it, a party of Basque refugee boys and girls, so called, has been housed in our midst, without consent sought or obtained and in flagrant defiance of the laws of neutrality. I have not seen them, I have strictly forbidden my children to go near their quarters. Certainly I never thought that a resident of Spuffle could be found to suggest that these undesirable aliens *should actually be taken to the seaside with our English boys and girls*. The men or women who put the proposal forward must have Red blood in their veins, I challenge them to deny it. Fortunately, the dastardly suggestion, instantly understood, was promptly turned down. We rejected it, first because Spuffle must be neutral even if Westminster and Whitehall, influenced by secret agitators, forget their duty. Secondly, it was pointed out, truly enough, that to take Basque children to the sea in company with our own would be to corrupt our little ones, perhaps beyond redemption.
>
> I venture to think that our spirited action in saving our children must deal a well-merited blow to all your subversive paper stands for.
>
> I remain, Sir
>
> (for Spuffle, if I dare say so)
>
> A SPUFFLER

* * *

Intervention under the name of non-intervention has now been going on for a year. Looking back to-day, is it not a ghastly tragedy that the Spanish Government was not allowed arms at the beginning of the war when it is almost certain that it could have defeated Franco at once and without risk, since neither Italy nor Germany were then deeply or openly committed? As there has been a good deal of discussion about the responsibility for that original decision not to allow the Spanish people arms to defend themselves with, I want to say that I have had final confirmation for the statement that I have made before—that the French proposal for non-intervention was determined by official British pressure. On August 4th, 1936, the French Cabinet met and were strongly in favour of helping the Spanish Government; on August 7th, as a result of inquiries about the British Government's attitude, they reversed their decision.

* * *

Aldous Huxley's *Encyclopaedia of Pacifism* has paper covers, contains 128 pages and 55 articles at the cost of 6*d*.; it revives in miniature the old format which Pierre Bayle adopted for his *Dictionnaire Historique et Critique* at the end of the seventeenth century, and which was carried on with such terrific propagandist success in Voltaire's *Dictionnaire Philosophique*; and, of course, on a huge scale in the *Encyclopaedia* edited by

D'Alembert and Diderot. The peculiar advantage of this format is that it enables an ingenious and witty writer to say all that he wants to say, deal with just those points he wants to discuss and avoid the tedious process of comprehensive argument which comparatively few of his readers would wade through. It is the difference journalistically between writing full-dress articles and writing a diary of snippets. The reader who would never have read an elaborate philosophic attack on the transcendental claims of Christianity, yet found himself confronting all manner of improper and diverting questions in the snappy little articles and comically erudite footnotes of Voltaire and Bayle. The devout would never have listened to an argument about the morals of the Old Testament, but a solemn and orthodox record of the behaviour of David and Solomon was enough to disturb more than one virgin mind. After this you will expect Aldous Huxley's Encyclopaedia to be full of spice; he has just the unusual learning and the type of mind to do for the twentieth century religion of patriotism what Bayle and Voltaire did for Catholicism. But the new Huxley who wrote the last part of *Eyeless in Gaza* wrote this Encyclopaedia. There is nothing to shock anyone. What you will find is a series of short, lucid and often brilliant arguments all supporting the pacifist point of view under such headings as Armaments Race, Biology and War, Chemical Warfare, Christian Church's Attitude to War, Class War, Education and Peace, Force, League of Nations, Non-Violence, The Peace Pledge Union and Shelley.

* * *

It's a mistake to think that man and woman have changed very much since the days of public executions, witchcraft, touching for the King's Evil and the rest of what we used to call "medievalism." These things are very deep in us; we still go and stand for hours on end outside a house where a murder has been committed; crowds gather outside the walls of the prison when a man is to be hanged, and, though they can no longer dip their handkerchiefs in the blood of a martyred hero and are not allowed to carry away bits of the rope, they still fight for souvenirs of death in a way which I think can only be accounted for by a surviving belief in the magical efficacy of the object which has had contact with an unusual and remarkable individual. The ex-Rector of Stiffkey was not perhaps a hero, but he was certainly an unusual man and the tragic manner of his death increased his popularity. After all, comparatively few of us live or die so adventurously. So it is not, I suppose, really surprising that a great concourse of local inhabitants, trippers and beach-pyjama girls went to his funeral and carried away the stones from his grave as souvenirs. What do they do with the stones? Put them under their pillows at night or just keep them on the mantel-piece? I don't know. But if anyone doubts the continuous belief in magic, let him ponder the anthropological significance of this more kindly incident reported in *Sunday Chronicle*:

> Women who fill small tins with sand from the foot-marks of the Duke and Duchess of Kent's children (on holiday near Sandwich) are worrying the police.

* * *

The sunshine was just catching the holly-hocks and the swallows circling round the thatched gables of my cottage . . . No, blast Beverley Nichols, he's used up that line of talk. . . . Well, anyway, it was a sunny day when I started to think about Chiang Kai-Shek's last speech. Looking up I noticed a linnet on the lavender. Do linnets eat lavender or find grubs on it or is it just good to sit on? The linnet may have been one of the brood that hatched out in the hedge just before it was cut. That was lucky, but I wonder what it was that disturbed the chaffinches in the rose arch? Mr. Park, the gardener, says jackdaws chased the mother bird off. This year's garden record went to the wrens; when I peered in at the nest nearly a dozen babies flew out and sat in the bushes near to be fed. But this is not the way to get on with Chiang Kai-Shek. I hear that there may have been a special reason for the Japanese "incident" of July 7th. It was the date of the meeting of the leaders of "Young China" and some Chinese Nationalists think the Japanese were in a hurry to stop an announcement of the political recognition of the Chinese Communists. Sounds far-fetched to me. What, by the way, is that patch of wet on the brick floor and rising up the wall on the sitting-room? "Summer damp"? There seems too much of it. I wonder whether the stream that trickles out in the garden passes under this room? I must find Mr. Park, who is a water-diviner as well as a genius in a garden. He comes with a twig which turns a somersault when it gets to the wet patch and traces out determinedly a line all across the room. What would Beverley Nichols say to that? A fairy fountain and a nymphs' water-garden in the sitting room? It would sound nice in print, but. . . . Oh, yes, Chiang Kai-Shek, of course. It's not so easy to work in the country as you think it will be when you are in town on a hot day.

CRITIC

THIS ENGLAND

Our prize of 5/- for the contribution at the head of the column goes this week to Mrs. Keir.

All cuttings should be addressed to "This England," 10 Great Turnstile, High Holborn, W.C.1.

Extracts should not be sent without their context. The article or passage should be sent in full with the proposed excerpt marked.

Sausages from pigs that die happy. A delicious speciality.—Advt. in *Hampshire Telegraph and Post*.

The familiar complaint that the awards made by the State in recognition of "services to literature" are ridiculously small has lost some of its force since the raising of the total sum allocated from £1,200 to £2,500.—*John o' London's Weekly*.

I do not want entirely to agree with Mr. Badderly, that the modern British crowd is not sporting, but I do think that the same spirit of sportsmanship is not so evident in this country as it was, say, 25 years ago. The reason is, I think, that the English spirit is not so dominant. The cosmopolitan character of the so-called British crowd has affected the high standard of sportsmanship so essentially associated with the English. Foreigners have taken up and interested themselves in all our sports, hence the tendency towards un-English behaviour.—Letter in *Daily Telegraph*.

A 70-years-old daughter of the third Baron Abinger, the Hon. Mrs. Helen Charlton, tours the West End of London nightly with a basket of delicacies for stray cats—and she has cancelled her holidays in case her wandering pets should suffer. Her basket contains such things as minced salmon, pâté de foie gras, minced beef, and cartons of milk.—*Daily Mail*.

Because the local council cannot buy the chains, the children's swings in the Yiewsley, Middlesex, recreation ground cannot be used. The difficulty is due to the chain makers being so busy on rearmament work.—*Daily Mirror*.

Others whose names might be expected to appear in the list of holiday-makers have more serious matters to attend to. The other day, someone asked Sir "Jock" Buchanan-Jardine if he was going away. "Away, now?" he said, "with hounds to look after and cub-hunting coming on?"—*Evening Standard*.

[The late ex-Rector of Stiffkey was mauled by a lion in Rye's Pavilion, and died last week.]

Although the show stopped to-day, Mr. Fred Rye told me the show is to go on. He said, "We shall be open for business to-morrow. We expect to get a big Bank Holiday crowd. The rector's name will still be used. We shall have a nice, sympathetic notice outside the booth, and people will be invited to pay to see the lion that mauled the rector and caused his death. The rector was a sportsman. I am sure he wouldn't mind."—*Daily Express*.

Sir Oswald (Mosley) spent last night in camp, sleeping in a little hut protected by a dyke and surrounded by sentries. Written on the hut were the words "Almost Nurnberg."—*Liverpool Daily Post*.

THE RURAL CONSTITUENCY

[The author of this article was Labour Candidate at Holland with Boston at the General Election of 1935 and at the recent by-election, at which the Labour poll rose by 1,300 votes.]

THERE are 292 County Constituencies in Great Britain. Not all of these can be described as rural, or agricultural, as many are mixed in character. All present special problems which have to be studied in considering the possibilities of Labour winning power. Without a good proportion of them coming over, Labour cannot gain a working majority.

The first problem is that of the candidate. The deplorable habit has grown up of regarding such constituencies as training grounds for newcomers. As soon as these have won their spurs, they go off to what are hopefully regarded as easier seats. The rural voter wants to know the candidate; this takes time in wide-flung areas, but it is an essential of success. Hence the importance of early adoption.

As time is such an important factor it is not always easy to find the man or woman with sufficient leisure. Travelling alone occupies much of the candidate's available time, and adds to his expenses. A constituency which may be forty miles long by as much across seems to offer small chance to busy people.

There is the further deterrent that agriculture is felt to be a difficult subject, and many will not take on these rural divisions for fear they may be caught out by not knowing the difference between mangolds and sugar-beet. My own experience is that such fears are groundless. A knowledge of the actual processes of farming is not essential. We are all concerned with the same bread-and-butter problems whether we drive a plough or a pen. Such matters as marketing can be studied and understood by any intelligent layman who is wise enough to recognise his own limitations and go to those who have the practical experience when he wants first-hand knowledge. It is of course fatal to pretend to have a knowledge of farming; the fraud is soon shown up. As consumers we are just as concerned with the progress of agriculture as any farmer, and we can all appreciate the plight of the farm worker with his thirty-five shillings a week.

Labour organisation is very difficult in these areas owing to distances involved, and lack of money. But close working with the Agricultural Workers Union—becoming every day more widely spread—gets over some of these problems. The Branch secretary provides a contact in the village, and once that initial contact has been made it is possible to get known in that area, organise meetings, and canvass.

Polling day presents special problems of its own. It is impossible to say how far agricultural workers can now be intimidated. My own impression is that a strong Union can neutralise to a large extent the influence of farmers and landowners. No one will question that some pressure is still used, but it tends to decline. A candidate is wise to work in the closest conjunction with the Union organiser, otherwise he may be regarded as a foreigner for some time.

A far greater obstacle is the distance many have to go in order to vote; sometimes a matter of five or six miles has to be walked or cycled. It is urgent that more polling stations should be arranged for the countryside. The motor-car problem will be with us until a more equitable method of taking the ballot can be introduced.

These difficulties are annoying, and when majorities are small they may well prove deciding factors. But they must not be used as excuses for our failure to capture these seats.

The position is more promising now than in 1935—in spite of by-election results. For some years the Labour Party with the Union has organised special campaigns during the summer months. This work has gone on quietly away from the limelight, and gradually we are building up support.

More help is urgently needed in such propaganda, but anyone taking a hand will soon find that topics which interest him, and which are discussed with such heat by the politically minded minority, are all but ignored in the rural areas.

Experience in the 1935 Election and in a recent by-election has taught me much. There is, for instance, little interest in the Spanish question. There is, however, a dogged determination that this country is not going to war for the League or for the sake of any cause except our own defence. This attitude must not be confused with pacifism. These quiet country people feel that the present Government has kept us out of war so far, and they are not at all sure that Labour's policy would do the same. In the 1935 Election there was some interest in the League and Abyssinia; but events proved to them that the League is no defence against war. Subtle distinctions such as Labour's foreign policy has involved in recent years are not appreciated. "Is it war?" is the plain question; not an easy one to answer at times! Rearmament is accepted as necessary, but its extent as a matter for the Government to decide.

All our town fuss about United and other Fronts does not interest the country voter. It is indeed refreshing to find that questions over which some of us get very heated do not trouble him in the least. All he sees is that there are rows going on in the Labour Party, and it did not help during a recent by-election to see a newspaper placard reading "Another Socialist Split." All this undoubtedly is having a weakening effect on our position. Any suggestion that Labour and Communism can work together will mean the loss of much of the ground we have slowly won.

It must be remembered that the majority of electors—and that means those who do not attend political meetings, or read political news—see things rather crudely, and association with Communism just means violent change. No amount of argument about the theoretical desirability of a United Front will change that belief. It has indeed been considerably strengthened by recent events in Russia, and there is the feeling that somehow Communism is responsible for the present situation in Spain. We may say all this is wrong-headed, but these are facts about the political temper of the people which must be faced.

What then does interest the rural voter? First, the wage question. This is rapidly becoming a nation-wide issue, and if the Labour Party is wise it will force that issue to the front on every possible occasion, for it raises the whole problem of agricultural policy. The farmer now says he would like to pay more but cannot afford to do so. He concedes the justice of the claim to a living wage.

Agricultural policy interests all. Farmer and worker are strongly attached to the soil. Their main interest is the progress of their own industry, and on that they have thought much. They are ready to discuss policy and argue about it. At the moment the farmers are not by any means happy about the results of six years of National Government. They see that there is no long-term plan behind the confusion of subsidies, quotas, trade restrictions and so on, which have been arranged somewhat haphazardly. Too often one section of the industry—having screamed loudest—has profited at the cost of another, and what has been gained on the swings has been lost on the roundabouts.

Farmers are now listening to Labour's policy. That is a great step forward even since 1935. I am not suggesting that this means a big swing over; you do not get that kind of thing on the land, but there is steady progress. It is interesting to note for instance that Labour's poll in the Lincolnshire divisions in 1935 was above the 1929 level by some 45,000 votes. These may be small gains, but they are significant.

The recent publication * of a fresh statement of Labour's agricultural policy is a step forward. It is a bold policy, and calls for all our skill and enthusiasm in its presentation to rural audiences. Free competition did not suit agriculture; the present intermediate policy is proving a failure; the farmers and their workers are now beginning to wonder if after all Labour's policy may not be sound.

Therein lies our opportunity.

E. E. REYNOLDS

* *Labour's Policy for our Countryside*, by the Rt. Hon. Lord Addison

MORE ABOUT CRANKS, LITTER, ETC.

LORD DUFFERIN suggests in a lively letter that I misinterpreted a phrase of his about "the anti-litter crank"; but, sorry though I am to have done so, I feel fairly certain that most people who read the phrase put the same interpretation on it as I did. After all, if you call a man "a nudist crank," I take it for granted that you have no enthusiasm for nudism; and, if I hear you saying that So-and-so is "a temperance crank," I conclude that you rather dislike propagandist teetotalism. When I lived among Unionists in my boyhood, I used to hear people being called "Socialist cranks," and the phrase usually implied that all men who were Socialists were cranks. If you use the word "crank" separately, it means an eccentric, a faddist, or a fusser; but, if you say that a man is "a something-or-other crank," does this not suggest that this "something or other" is rather cranky in itself. I have certainly never heard of an anti-vivisectionist speaking of another anti-vivisectionist as "an anti-vivisectionist crank."

As for the anti-litter crank, I did not for a moment believe that Lord Dufferin, in using the phrase, was advocating litter-throwing as a holiday pastime, but I did gather that he objected to people who make a fuss about litter-throwing and try to put a stop to it. He believes, he says, that "people who are 'screwy' about litter frequently create more ugliness than they prevent," and on his own confession he includes among the anti-litter cranks people who believe in putting warning notice-boards and receptacles for litter in public places. He holds that the cause of anti-litter can best be furthered by education through the press. This is a great compliment to the power of the press, but I am afraid you might as well try to put down burglary through press propaganda as try to put down litter-throwing by this means. Consider how much press propaganda there has been in favour of safety and unselfishness on the roads, and how, in spite of it, thousands of motorists persist in driving dangerously and, oftener still, selfishly. The press can do much, but great results are seldom achieved without the assistance of cranks.

If it were not for the cranks, half the beautiful streets in London would be in danger. Talk to a speculative builder who has been foiled in his design to pull down a bit of old London in order to make a site for flats, and you will find that he regards the few people who were fussy and active enough to oppose and defeat him as a parcel of busybodies and cranks. If it were left to uncranky people like myself, nothing practical would be done in such circumstances. I might write a letter to a newspaper, but even that would be done at the instigation of a crank. As it is, the crank hurries from door to door with a petition to be signed, makes the lives of Town Councillors a hell, beards County Councillors in their den, bullies officials, pesters Members of Parliament, and generally conveys to those in authority the impression that, if some old building which most of the petitioners have never even seen is not saved, there will be a popular uprising. That is the sort of man I like. He is the man who has saved what has been saved of old Hampstead. He is the man who has helped to enlarge Hampstead Heath. On the other hand, everything that is ugly in Hampstead is the work of men who were not cranks. I am not a crank myself, but how I wish I were!

How, for example, I wish I were like a friend of mine who, when he saw a man tearing up a letter in the Strand one day and throwing the pieces on the pavement, said to him: "Pick that paper up." The man became indignant and even abusive, but my friend quietly said to him: "If you don't pick every scrap of that paper up in the next two minutes, I will give you in charge to a policeman." The man hesitated for a moment, and then, probably believing my friend's suggestion that throwing paper on the streets is a criminal offence, picked up the scraps of paper one by one and put them in his pocket.

My friend is undoubtedly an anti-litter crank of the first order; and, if there were a thousand as good as he in London, you would not see so much as a discarded bus-ticket on the pavement all the way from Kew to Whitechapel. He was at one time greatly perturbed by the way in which handbills are given to passers-by in the streets only to be glanced at and then thrown into the gutter. He said to me one day: "If it is legal to throw a small piece of paper into the gutter it must be legal to throw a large piece—say, a copy of the *Times*—and, if it is legal to throw one copy of the *Times*, it must be legal to throw a hundred copies of the *Times*. In my opinion, the only way to compel the authorities to take action against people who throw handbills and torn-up letters on the pavement is for some of us to go out and throw such masses of paper on to the streets that Parliament or the police will have to do something about it. My idea is to organise the editors and other leading journalists on the newspapers in a great paper-throwing campaign for example. Some week-day afternoon, Strachey of the *Spectator* and Massingham of the *Nation* will set off in a taxi packed with newspapers from Victoria Station down Victoria Street, and, as the taxi proceeds, each of them will keep flinging masses of newspapers out of the taxi-windows.

"They will, of course, be stopped before they have got very far by the police and arrested. Well and good. Ten minutes later, the Editor of the *Times* and the Editor of the *Morning Post* set off from Victoria in another taxi, also packed with old newspapers, and hurl the papers furiously through the windows till they are held up by the police. Once more, good. Ten minutes later, out comes another taxi and bowls down Victoria Street with J. L. Garvin and the Editor of the *Sunday Times* jettisoning copies of their respective organs as they go till they, too, are arrested. And so the thing would go on with the Editors of the *New Statesman*, the *Daily News*, the *Daily Telegraph*, the *Daily Chronicle*, and all the other papers joining in, and, when the editors had all been arrested, they could be followed by famous contributors to the press—E. V. Lucas, E. V. Knox, Belloc, A. P. Herbert, James Bone, Ivor Brown—all throwing litter like mad till Victoria Street was knee-deep in it and the traffic in the streets was hopelessly disorganised. By the end of the day, there wouldn't be a single reputable journalist in London who hadn't been arrested.

"The thing would cause a sensation. It would be a public scandal. And, when the trials came on, every prisoner in turn would quietly ask the magistrate to define exactly what amount of paper it is legal to throw on the pavement—whether a sheet of notepaper, or a page of a newspaper, or a whole newspaper, or hundreds of newspapers. Obviously the magistrate would be in a fix, and, even if the prisoners were all fined, public opinion would be roused and would insist that throwing litter on the streets, if only a bus-ticket, must be made an indictable offence."

Unfortunately, none of the editors whom my friend approached had enough public spirit to fall in with his scheme. If all the journalists in London had done so, who can doubt that the litter problem in England would now be well on its way to a solution? An England in which every citizen is a crank will be an England free from litter.

As for notice-boards and receptables for litter, it may be true that they are often ugly, but there is no necessity for their being ugly. I am sure that Mr. Clough Williams-Ellis could easily bring together a committee to design notice-boards and receptables that would fit harmoniously into the landscape. The grounds of the Forum became, not less beautiful, but more so, when Signor Boni planted flowers in them with little notices to the public "Rispettate i fiori." After all, notice-boards and receptables take up very little room: litter, after a Bank Holiday, often takes up the whole landscape. That is why I prefer the anti-litter crank to the litter-thrower.

Lord Dufferin claims that in his tolerant attitude to litter he has Nature on his side. No one, he declares, could call

Nature tidy-minded. Has he forgotten the burying beetle which tidies away so many repellent objects from the surface of the earth? Has he forgotten the tidying effect of rain which, before the roads were tarred, used so beautifully to clean the leaves of the hedges that had been made dusty and untidy by the activities of men? Lord Dufferin himself admits that Nature is so intolerant of an untidy piece of paper in a beauty-spot that she sends down her showers to reduce it to a pulp. Nature has never yet been known to deposit an empty sardine-tin on a hill-top. She covers the Downs with snow, not with paper-bags. She conceals the squalor of a vacant building-plot with flowers. Her favourite animal—it must be her favourite: otherwise so selfish an animal could never have survived—is the cat, which is a model of tidiness. Yes, Nature, except during earthquakes, volcanic eruptions, gales, and sandstorms, is certainly tidy. At least, a specious and unscrupulous debater could easily make out a case for calling her so. Y. Y.

AN EQUATION IN DAMAGES

THREE years ago almost to a day, a Lincolnshire farmer of the name of Groom was driving his brother, an eminent official at the Bank of England, along a Lincolnshire road when a lorry carelessly driven came out of a side turning, collided violently with the car in which the brothers were travelling, and seriously injured the banker. All the circumstances pointed to negligence on the side of the lorry driver, and the police, after a successful prosecution, obtained a conviction which although not the determining factor in the matter of civil damages indicated without much doubt which way the wind would blow in a civil court.

The obvious course for the injured banker to take was therefore to start an action against the owners of the lorry and this he did. But to cover the possibility of his brother's driving having been at fault he proceeded simultaneously against his brother (whom he knew of course to be insured) and there were consequently two insurance companies interested in the action—one through the policy of the lorry owners, the other through the policy of the farmer brother. And it so happened that these two companies had at the same time another not dissimilar case in which two cars insured by them were concerned, so they decided to pool both accidents and by joint action keep the damages in both as low as possible. That was done, and in the Groom case Messrs. Crocker, the solicitors, being informally advised by counsel that damages would probably be heavier against the lorry owners than against the farmer, admitted negligence on behalf of the farmer, who had damages of £924 given against him which were of course met by insurance companies.

The policy by which the farmer was insured contained the usual clause giving the company the right to conduct the case as it thought fit, and Messrs. Crocker believed that the wording of the clause was strong enough to justify what was done in admitting negligence and liability. But the farmer was annoyed; and given the same circumstances most of us probably would have been annoyed, for the one thing that we are all convinced of is that we are splendid drivers, and in this particular case all the evidence went to show that the farmer's view of his own driving was right. The annoyance is intelligible enough, but a lesser man might have been inclined to swallow it, and after a grumble or two to relieve his feelings, might have forgotten all about it. Not so Mr. Groom. In the veins of these Lincolnshire farmers runs the fighting blood of the old Vikings, and Mr. Groom was determined to have his rights, clear his name and get damages out of the people who had admitted on his behalf that his driving had been bad. To this end he launched an action against his insurance company, which had instructed Messrs. Crocker, and against Messrs. Crocker who had (he claimed) subordinated his interests to those of the insurance company, claiming damages from both of them (*a*) for negligence in admitting that he was negligent and (*b*) for libel in respect of letters written by them in the conduct of the case.

With the jury Mr. Groom was very successful, winning on both points against both defendants and being awarded in all £4,000 damages, but after legal argument the judge was less sympathetic, holding that there was no case against the insurance company and confining the jury's damages to the £2,000 which the jury gave against Messrs. Crocker.

It would appear to be the general opinion of motorists that the judgment against Messrs. Crocker is right and that it is an intolerable wrong for a motorist to have his reputation as a careful driver given away in order to spare the pocket of his insurers. For that view there is undoubtedly much to be said. But the judgment as it stands leaves, or appears to leave, the respective rights of insurer and insured in this position—that the insurers may tell the insured how they would like the action fought but the insured need not agree with them and may (if he so prefers) manage the case on quite different lines, fight where the insurers would settle, deny what the insurers would admit, assert what the insurers would deny. If that is truly the law as it emerges from this judgment then motorists should think twice before they throw their hats into the air to celebrate a triumph; for if once a dual control of third party actions is allowed, or if the single control is vested in the motorist instead of his insurer, then an enormous rise in insurance premiums is inevitable and the increased cost of settling claims will fall heavily on the jubilant motorist.

But let us leave the general question and consider the figures in this remarkable case. The banker who was badly injured, who had a fractured skull, who suffered great pain and discomfort, and was unable to work for months, received £924 in damages. Of that amount probably £150 would be "special" damages, *i.e.*, the recovery of money which he had actually spent on doctors and nurses, so that the compensation for his suffering and disablement would work out at £774. The farmer who got £4,000 from the jury had no "special" damages, and if the injuries done to him by the reflection on his driving were itemised the a/c. would run like this:

Item 1.—The admission of negligence might have made a difference to his no-claim bonus for one year. That point is not certain because the damage done to his car (irrespective of the third party claim) would probably have cost him his bonus in any event; but take it as an item in the account and we get say £2 10*s.* as the damage suffered.

Item 2.—In subsequent proposal forms he would have to mention these damages and perhaps put up with less favourable insurance terms in future. That again is hypothetical, but let us assume that he had at some time in his later career a £10 excess put into his policy. Thereafter he would have to bear the first £10 of such claims as he had on motor policies. A generous capitalisation of that loss would be £40.

Item 3.—He would be held up to the public gaze and to the view of his friends as a man who had at one given moment been guilty of negligent driving.

It will be noticed that the first two items are cash items (hypothetical it is true but still cash), while the third is a matter of defamation which has no ascertainable cash value. But a very simple sum in arithmetic will show the figure that the jury put on this imponderable item, all that is necessary being to add item 1 to item 2 and deduct the total from £4,000. Take item 1 as £2 10*s.* and item 2 as £40 and we get a total of £42 10*s.* Take that away from £4,000 and we are left with £3,957 10*s.* as the jury's estimate of the general damages suffered by a motorist who has it said of him that he was for one moment negligent in driving his car.

Now we can get our equation. Mr. Groom, the banker who was badly injured in the collision and suffered from all the unpleasant physical effects that follow a fractured skull, gets £774 and Mr. Groom the farmer is awarded £3,957 10*s.* for being accused of a momentary negligence in driving a car; so that according to the juries in our courts of law it is 411 per cent. more painful and damaging to a man to have it said o him that he once for a few seconds drove carelessly than tf

have his skull fractured and spend several months in great physical discomfort and incapacity. This is indeed a spiritual age if a citizen's reputation for invariable good driving is worth 411 per cent. more than his bodily health and strength.

ASSESSOR

THE GUNS

"Has the Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs any further information regarding the Spanish guns emplaced opposite Gibraltar? Do His Majesty's Government know the country of origin of these guns?"—Question in the House, July 25th.

"The picture which Mr. Lloyd George has painted of the situation in the neighbourhood of Gibraltar was not accurate. . . . No useful purpose was served by creating an atmosphere of suspicion about conditions that did not exist."—Mr. Eden in House, July 30th (Times).

HARK to the voice of England
calming the restless House,
where Tories strain at their moorings
and Socialists cavil and grouse!
Now will the Government falter?
A word through the Commons runs . . .
"What of the guns round Gibraltar?
England, what of the guns?"

Eden for England stands steady,
clear-toned and cool in his place;
"You whisper of batteries ready,
you hint of an enemy base,
you whine of a Fascist danger,
you fear what the Reich intends . . .
these are not the guns of a stranger,
these guns are the guns of friends!

"Wide are the seas, and who is
the ward of the western gates?
All are welcome in Suez!
All are free of the Straits!"
He speaks, and a nameless suspicion
wavers away like smoke,
for are Britons not friends by tradition
with Latin and Teuton folk?

Friends of the Duce and Führer,
are not our cultures twin?
Wagner, and Schiller, and Dürer,
Dante and Raphael our kin?
No interests our kinship can threaten,
no mischief our friendship dispel.
"What of the guns?" questions Britain,
and Britain replies, "All is well!"

SAGITTARIUS

Correspondence

CONDITIONS IN THE POLISH UNIVERSITIES

SIR,—It was with much interest that I read the article by Mr. Israel Cohen in your issue of March 20th, entitled "University Hooliganism," as I knew that I would shortly be visiting the Polish Universities in an academic capacity. During my visit I made it my business to inquire whether Mr. Cohen's account constituted a true picture of the present state of affairs.

I found that it was correct in every particular. Lecturers or Professors of Jewish antecedents now habitually carry with them some means of defence with which they hope to ward off an attack by a band of Endek students, should it occur, until a policeman should come upon the scene. Even then, it would be by no means certain that they would be safe. Hitherto the teachers of the University of Warsaw have been attacked only with clubs and sticks; the use of sticks with safety-razor blades fixed at the end has been reserved for Jewish students, who in general dare not go about singly. Much of the blame rests with the Rector and Senate of the University who in several cases took disciplinary proceedings, not against the offending students, but against certain Lecturers who had publicly protested against these disorders. On the occasion of the May-day procession this year a group of medical students in a motor car threw a bomb which injured several of the workmen and killed a child of five. Their identity is known; no action was taken against them. A Cambridge observer felt they might at least have been rusticated.

If it is the students themselves who persecute Jewish students and teachers in the Universities, it is the Government which persecutes freedom of thought and Liberal or Socialist opinions. An eminent mathematician of my acquaintance had many files of scientific calculations removed from his house, after a police "perquisition" (which may happen at any hour of the day or night), under the pretence that they included something political, and only got them back many months later, after he had had to make them all over again. This weapon of playing havoc with intellectual work is freely used against anyone who is associated with Liberal opinions. In this connection I particularly want to bring to the notice of your readers the case of the students and young lecturers at the University of Wilno, which still hangs in the balance. A rather large group of these men and women, including among them, as I know personally, some young scientists of first-class intellectual attainments, published for some time a periodical called *Po Prostu* ("Simply and Plainly; a literary and social monthly"). Copies of this which I have examined bear a strong resemblance in general tone to THE NEW STATESMAN AND NATION itself; there were articles on Abyssinia, the Writers' Congress in Paris, the French Popular Front, etc. *Po Prostu* gave details of the restriction of the budget for education, through which a million children in Poland have now no schools at all, elsewhere the period of education is reduced from 6 years to 2 or 3; and there may often be only one teacher to three simultaneous classes. *Po Prostu* worked for a closer understanding between the Poles and the White Russians, who form in the Wilno Woiwodship a numerically strong minority. *Po Prostu* fought against the "propaganda of the spade," a movement in Poland to reduce the number of intellectuals relative to the peasant class. It also included literary articles and poems of some merit, many of which were written by members of the "Young Wilno group" as it is called. Here at Wilno, if anywhere in Poland, life was stirring in the Universities as we know it in Western countries.

That was enough to invite its suppression by the Government. In January of this year many members of the group were arrested on a charge of secret membership of the Communist Party (punishable in Poland by many years imprisonment) or a sentence to the dreaded concentration camp of Beresza-Kartuska, presided over by a succession of notorious sadists. The issue of *Po Prostu* for January 20th contains a list of these members with their admirable academic records. Seven days before, one member of the group had received a sentence of 5 years imprisonment, two others of 3 years each (though the main charge was not proved); the others, some twenty or so, were acquitted. Against this unduly lenient treatment the public prosecutor appealed, and at a later rehearing, nearly all the members were sentenced to terms of imprisonment of about 2 years duration. A second appeal is now lodged, and meanwhile the members of the group are carrying on their normal lives in the University. But it is hardly likely to succeed, and as in any case the periodical is suppressed, the Government has stifled fairly efficiently one of Poland's brightest centres of young intellectual life.

As a lover of Poland and her people, I am anxious that such facts as these should have the fullest publicity in the great democratic countries of the West, on whose good opinion Poland still to some extent relies. For obvious reasons I must sign myself

POLOPHIL

Cambridge.

THE BACKWARD CHILD

SIR,—Those who assisted me in my survey of subnormal children in London schools will be sincerely grateful, as I am myself, to Dr. Glover for his sympathetic review of our work. It is satisfying to find so eminent a member of the medical profession concurring in our chief conclusion: namely, that, though physical defects may often be contributory, "the *main* reasons for educational backwardness are psychological." The agreement, however, goes much farther than he imagines. The various emotional tendencies that he thinks I have overlooked had already been fully discussed in my Heath Clark Lectures, published two

years ago. Even in the present survey, it is noted that 33 per cent. of the backward cases were found to be suffering from nervous conditions of the kind he mentions. If in the present volume these factors were not described in detail, it was not because the author felt that "the teachers, school medical officers, and child welfare workers for whom he writes would take more kindly to a book in which primitive factors were kept discreetly in their place"—my opinion of teachers, school medical officers and child welfare workers is very different from that—but because it seemed sufficient to refer the reader to the fuller treatment elsewhere. Dr. Glover complains that "the chapter on temperament and character is one of the smallest in the book." But the book is labelled "Volume Two"; and, as stated in the preface to the whole work, defects of character are the subject of the first volume (already published), and defects of temperament are the subject of a third.

On one important point there seems to be a genuine difference of opinion. We calculated that at least 6 per cent. of the school population of London owe their backwardness to inferior intelligence. This Dr. Glover regards as "not only an extremely pessimistic conclusion, but one which begs an important question." He apparently supposes that we "took it for granted" that the disabilities were "bound to be innate" because we did "not investigate" them. On the contrary, it was only after a special investigation of each individual child, together with his family history, that such a diagnosis was made (not, by the way, a diagnosis of "deficiency"). In view of this "pessimistic conclusion" he asks whether "we can leave the backward child in the educational psychologist's hands." There is no need to do so. If any psycho-analyst believes he can gain better results than the teacher and the child guidance clinic combined, he is free to do what the educational psychologist has already done—devote half his time for twenty years or so to research and treatment among these children, unpaid. Special training will be necessary; for the experience gained in private practice is very different from that required for work among the elementary schools. No doubt in the near future the Clinic of Psycho-analysis will make many welcome contributions to the study of such children. But my conviction is that its main conclusion will in the end be much the same as ours: namely, that with the delinquent, the neurotic, and the merely backward, a remarkable improvement may often be obtained, but that with the innate dullards and with the defectives from the special schools the benefits, as a rule, will be small.

Gower Street, London, W.C.1. CYRIL BURT

A CONSPIRACY OF SILENCE

SIR,—Many hundreds of thousands of men and women have been participating in an endeavour to induce the Government to abandon the provision in the new Contributory Pensions Bill for the black-coated workers which for the first time introduces a differential income limit for men and women entrants. Seventeen National Federations of Retail Traders (the newsagents, grocers, confectioners, tobacconists, etc.), and twenty-two women's organisations representing differing interests have united in their protests, and in doing so have protested also on behalf of thousands of unorganised women supporting themselves as lodging-house keepers, dressmakers, etc.

In the course of the last month the Bill has been before the House of Lords where this particular provision has met with strong and determined opposition from all sides of the Chamber. It was opposed by speeches on the Second Reading and in Committee on June 8th, Lord Balfour of Burleigh proposed an amendment which was supported by speeches from Lords Cecil, Crewe, Selborne and Strabolgi. It was pushed to a division but was defeated by 49 to 25 votes. The Government had issued a double lined whip but even so the majority of those who voted against them came from their own side. On the third Reading on June 30th, Lord Balfour again challenged a division and on this occasion the Government escaped defeat by a majority of only eight votes—the numbers being 41 and 33.

These are events one would have supposed to be of sufficient interest to be recorded in the daily press. But they have been passed over in complete silence by the newspapers from the *Times* to the *Daily Herald*. Those which purport to report parliamentary proceedings have merely recorded that the Bill had passed through Committee or Third Reading, as the case might be, "without amendment."

What can be the explanation of this conspiracy of silence? The differential treatment of women under this Bill has aroused a feeling of resentment among them such as has not been witnessed since the granting of the franchise. It has been truly represented by the contest in the House of Lords where but for the absence of a few supporters on June 30th, we should have had the unusual spectacle of a Government defeat and a bill involving finance returned to the House of Commons. How is one to account for this being completely concealed by the press? It is clearly not fair to the women readers who are deprived of all information on a matter of vital concern to them. It is not fair to the champions whose efforts on their behalf remain unknown. Is it fair that the public in general should be led to imagine that legislation which differentiates on sex lines can be imposed with such ease? The defeat of the Government last year on the question of equal pay in the Civil Service has given warning. It would surely be wise to face the fact that the women of this country who share the burdens of the community cannot much longer be treated by Governments as a class whose interests can safely be ignored.

51, Gordon Square, W.C.1. P. STRACHEY

THE BRITISH PAVILION IN PARIS

SIR,—Your correspondent X. Y. Z. has failed to realise all the thoughts behind the comment muttered by so many people coming out of the British Pavilion: "My God, these English!"

These comments are often mocking, I admit, but there is much more in them than that. I talked to many people, old friends and strangers, in Paris; I used to live there; and to my delight and amusement I discovered that the British Pavilion has been unexpectedly successful. Folk don't go to exhibitions to be instructed: they want to be amused; and the propaganda in the Russian, German, and Italian Pavilions, is too blatantly insistent, too dull, converting only the converted. Great Britain has given to the Continental visitors at the Exhibition the picture of this land which they have for years erroneously accepted in their society press, their comic papers, and in their theatres—a country of riches, of queer traditions, insular, absurd in its dignity, accepting its mechanical and industrial triumphs almost without comment, devoted to its aristocracy, to the week-end, the Country House, to Huntin', Shootin', Fishin'. "*Vive le Sport!*" And at the Exhibition, where, a month ago, there was no music, no dancing, no amusement of any sort—eating was too expensive to be an amusement—the British Pavilion was a novel success. We were admired and envied in our prosperity and in our freedom from the boredom of propaganda.

I hesitate to believe that such a triumph was intentional from the first. Indeed it was more successful as a traditional British blunder. *Vive l'Angleterre!* GEORGE WODEN

TU QUOQUE

SIR,—In THE NEW STATESMAN AND NATION of July 24th the anonymous reviewer of my book "The White Sahibs in India" reproves me for my "carelessness," pointing out that I can't spell (which, of course, is true: neither could Shakespeare).

But since carelessness worries your reviewer so much, I wish he would set a better example. Had he done so he would not have described me as "the bearer of a message which led to the Irwin Gandhi truce." This statement is little short of a libel; for so far from doing anything of the sort I criticised that disgraceful truce very strongly at the time.

I also object to being called a "non-resistant," which I believe is something vaguely connected with electricity. Having spent most of my life *resisting* things I dislike I am writing at the moment from a Conference of War *Resisters*. REGINALD REYNOLDS

THE ACTIVITIES OF COLONEL BECK

SIR,—In reply to M. Czarnomski:

1. I do not doubt that the overwhelming majority of Poles wish to live in peace with their neighbours. That is, perhaps, one of the reasons why Colonel Beck's foreign policy is, by all accounts, unpopular in Poland. Unfortunately, Polish public opinion is unable to make itself felt.

2. Certainly, the Polish-German and Polish-Russian non-aggression pacts have been observed hitherto, but what of it? The value of a non-aggression pact in itself is about that of the ink with which it is written—parchment is expensive—and it is important only by reason of what lies behind it. That is usually revealed, as in the case of the Polish-German pact, by the events that follow its signature.

3. I have no information about the condition of Colonel Beck's

soul, but I have a good deal about his career. I have given the most important events in his career during the last four years. Your readers can draw their own conclusions.

I recognise, as my article showed, that there are excuses for the change in Polish policy in 1933, for which M. Edmond Daladier had as great a responsibility as Marshal Pilsudski and Colonel Beck. In view of the pro-Fascist policy of the British Government, the abdication of France and the consequent abdication of the League of Nations, what can the States of Central and Eastern Europe do but rally to Germany? One day last year, after the lamentable Popular Front Government had come into office in France, a prominent statesman of the Little Entente said bitterly: "If Anglo-French policy does not change soon, we shall all have to become the vassals of Germany—and we will be good vassals."

7 Avenue Gaspard-Vallette, ROBERT DELL
Geneva, Switzerland.

THE CECILE BOOYSEN CLINIC

SIR,—The Cecile Booysen Clinic (until recently the Goswell Women's Welfare Centre) is one of the few voluntary clinics which is attempting to fill a serious gap in the health services provided for married women.

It is found that many women coming to the clinic for birth control teaching are in more or less urgent need of gynaecological treatment. This is, of course, available at the hospitals, but since it may take a whole morning of journeys and waiting to attend out-patients' sessions, many working-class women who cannot afford to do this two or three times a week fail to seek treatment in time, and therefore run quite unnecessary risks of serious illness. It is also found that many patients suffer from nervous conditions, anxiety and depression which can be lessened by individual medical consultations. Both these services, in addition to the teaching of safe and adequate methods of birth control, are provided by the medical and social workers at this clinic.

The late Dr. Cecile Booysen, the founder and first Medical Officer of the Centre, had this work very much at heart and the Committee have therefore decided to give the clinic her name, and to raise a fund in her memory.

To put its finances on a really sound basis the clinic is also in very urgent need of a much larger number of regular annual subscribers. May we therefore appeal to your readers to enable us to continue in lightening the burdens of their less fortunate fellow creatures, and at the same time to perpetuate the memory of the ability and devotion of the Clinic's founder?

Promises of annual subscriptions and donations to the Cecile Booysen Memorial Fund will be gratefully received and acknowledged by the Hon. Treasurer, Mrs. Grace Lowen, at this address.

OTTOLINE MORRELL — MARY ADAMS
LISTOWEL — REBECCA WEST
ELEANOR BARTON — VERA BRITTAIN
M. SARGANT FLORENCE — STORM JAMESON
WINIFRED HORRABIN — ETHEL MANNIN
CATHERINE CARSWELL — MILES MALLESON
NORAH C. JAMES

The Cecile Booysen Clinic,
39, Spencer Street,
Goswell Road, E.C.1.

BLACK AND WHITE PROBLEM

SIR,—Some of your astute problem-solvers may have pointed out that the data provided in the problem quoted by "Critic" last week are more than sufficient. All that is required is: first man's answer is blown away on the wind, second says: "He says he's white," third man says: "He's a liar."

The statement: "I am black" is clearly impossible. Therefore the first man must say "I am white" and, of course, be white. The second man, by affirming the truth, declares himself to be white, whilst the third, by contradicting anything that has been previously stated shows himself to be black. H. JOHN EDWARDS

132, Minard Road,
Catford. S.E.6.

BYWAYMEN

SIR,—Your contributor, S. L. B., and John Haly have forgotten that the young men of the countryside to-day have acquired the tastes and mentality of the worst type of "townee." They have none of the respect for rural etiquette which was inherent in their forefathers. Moreover they form the majority of *regular* users of byways, and, as such, commit all the sins of the "cockney on holiday."

The farmer is to be pitied. He is expected to run his farm on business lines—and he must do so if it is to show a profit. Yet he has to contend with the upkeep of byways, loss by damage and petty thieving, and the possibility of a heavy claim for damages when some of S. L. B.'s "little children" stumble over a style.

It has been my experience that few, if any, farmers are antagonistic towards the genuine countryman who finds his pleasure in an evening ramble through fields made warm by a long day's sun.

Mattesdon Farm, Chesham, Bucks. WM. S. HERON

Miscellany

A PROSPEROUS JEW IN GERMANY

I REVISITED the Saxon town of Z. with an introduction to Herr A., a Jewish manufacturer who, when I called at his office, was awaiting with grim relish a visit from the Chief of Police.

On a small table, beside a box of cigarettes, A. had spread the latest issue of the *Z Advertiser*, opened at the page carrying under prominent headlines an article entitled "How Officials Should Behave Towards Jews." This article the Chief of Police could not fail to see when he sat down and took a cigarette, for A. had outlined it in red pencil.

The situation promised to be piquant, since courtesy towards Jews was not among the article's recommendations, and what the Polizeidirektor wanted was a large subscription to the Police Athletic Club, which A. told me was extremely hard up.

Presently A.'s "Aryan" secretary came in nervously to announce the arrival of the Polizeidirektor. "I shan't be long," A. said to me. "If you would care for a stroll, you will find the old church up the street as interesting outside as in."

His meaning became clear as soon as I reached the church. The town of Z. is unusually rich in places of worship, and this church is no longer in use. Its south wall cannot therefore have seemed an incongruous site for the glass case in which were fixed pages of Julius Streicher's notorious anti-Jewish paper, *Der Stürmer*. Similar cases can be seen all over Germany—topped, as this was, by a gross cut-out of a Jewish face coloured blood-red, and with the Streicher slogan: "Die Juden sind unser Unglück" ("The Jews are our misfortune") painted in large letters across the wooden frame.

I was able to read *Der Stürmer* at leisure, for none of the many passers-by stopped even to glance at it. This issue announced that Jews were bastards; that "Jewish-Bolshevist" interference in Spain was liable to cause a world war—A., incidentally, had no idea that General Franco had received German aid; that an Altona firm, in a memorial tribute to a dead Jewish employee inserted according to custom in a newspaper, had praised his loyal service; and that a "non-Jew" in Hamm was playing the organ in the synagogue. Of these offences, the last seemed to be the worst, for it was followed by two exclamation marks.

The Chief of Police had left when I returned to A.'s office.

"Did you give him anything?" I asked.

"Of course," said A. "I have to go to Brussels on a business trip next week. I don't want to be mysteriously deprived of my passport. The Polizeidirektor was in fact extremely polite. I don't blame him. He is only a victim of the system. Now, let's have lunch."

We left the office and had been walking for some minutes down side streets when A. said: "This isn't the shortest way to my house, but it is the least frequented." He raised his hat to a hatless man who had bowed to him from the other side of the road. "That looks friendly enough, doesn't it? As a matter of fact, many of my acquaintances are still cordial. Some of them even go out of their way to acknowledge me. But others prefer the easier course of rudeness, and I prefer not to give them the opportunity for it."

"How has the persecution affected your business?" I asked.

A. smiled. "Business is business in every country," he replied. "I have never been busier in my life. I am actually turning orders away. One or two of my competitors have taken the trouble to point out to my customers that my firm is non-Aryan, but it makes no difference. I have had the pleasure, such as it is, of pointing out the same thing when refusing orders from people I dislike. I have my pride, you know."

"But many Jews have been ruined," I said.

"My goods happen to be of better quality than my rivals'," he said.

After a silence he went on: "Apart from my business, I have no life. Socially, I am quite isolated now. I neither visit nor am visited by a single family in Z. My wife has been under treatment for her nerves these last six months. It is hard for a woman to endure a continual rain of small insults. Have you ever gone into a shop and been curtly told, by a fellow who hitherto has been polite to the point of subservience, that he is sold out of articles you have seen stacked up in his front window?

"My daughter, who is 26, has only one friend, a girl who was specially devoted to her at school. She knows no young men at all—not one. She has no prospects of marriage and children. If she married a Jew, her life would be made unbearable. "Mixed" marriages are illegal. I would like to send her abroad—to England for preference, but how can I do that when it is forbidden to take money out of the country?"

I asked him how long he thought the persecution would last.

"I do not think I shall see the end of it," replied A., who is in his fifties. "Did you notice, hanging behind my desk, what appears to be an ancient coat of arms, with the Imperial eagle in the centre? That is a grant of protection awarded to my firm by the Emperor at the end of the eighteenth century, when this town was a Free City of the Holy Roman Empire. Even then, Jews were not allowed to trade here without special leave. Anti-Semitism is a recurring disease in this country."

As we neared A.'s home he said I must forgive him if his hospitality was not all it should be. "We had to dismiss our two excellent young maids. No woman under 45 is now allowed to serve a Jewish family. You see the implication. Pretty, isn't it? Our girls wept when they left, and they still correspond with my wife. You will see what we have in their place."

The door was opened by a sour-faced, elderly woman who did not smile as we entered. Before we had finished dinner she came in to ask, in a very off-hand fashion, if she could go, because there was a film she wanted to see. When A. said she might go she left the room without a word of thanks. "One grows used to it," he said. "She is quite a good cook. If I dismiss her she has the power to make things even more disagreeable for my wife by spreading slanderous stories about us. Being Jews, we should have no remedy."

The next morning A. showed me over his factory. An extension was being completed, and he took me down to the basement. In the passages were large direction signs saying "To the air-raid shelter." This was a large whitewashed room, built of concrete and faintly lit, before the electric lights were switched on, by a series of small windows placed near the roof and protected on the outside by heavy grilles and on the inside by steel shutters which could be snapped to in an instant.

We stood in the gloom, listening to the faint rattle of the machinery overhead. "I don't think there'll be a war just yet," A. said, "but one might as well be ready for it. You know, I admire a good deal of Hitler's policy. He has pulled Germany together, and as a German I approve of that. I am aware that a great deal of what I read in the papers is lies. But it is extremely hard to resist a lie if it is told often enough. It gets past you into your subconscious mind and affects you without your knowing it. Let us go upstairs again. There's something else I want to show you."

We went up to the first floor, and A. unlocked a door into a room communicating with another. The first was furnished as a living-room, the second as a bedroom. "The last line of defence," he said laconically. "If the screw is turned tighter against us I shall live here, above my office, rather than be a butt for fools in the street."

We descended to the office, and the secretary came in with the post. A. passed to me the first letter he opened. "That is from a bookseller I used to deal with. He is an enthusiastic anti-Semite, but you will notice that his letter begins: 'Very honoured Mr. A.' As I told you, business is business."

Another letter, from the Superintendent of the Jewish Cemetery outside the town, compelled A. to go there to settle some question about a family grave. I accompanied him in his car, and as we drove through the entrance gate, which stood wide open, he asked me had I observed that the glass in the lamps above the gate-posts was smashed. "You see, it is never too late," he said, "to insult a Jew."

On our return A.'s secretary informed him that L., a journalist I had met on a former visit to Z., would like me to call on him.

"How does he know I'm here?" I inquired. "I haven't written to him."

A. shrugged. "I can only tell you that this is a knowledgeable town," he said.

I visited L., whom I had known as a Radical making enough money out of free-lance work to enable him to spend three months of every year in foreign travel. When he opened the door of his flat his appearance shocked me, he looked so tired and ill. He told me his free-lance market had been entirely destroyed by the regimentation of the German Press. "I work twice as hard for half the money," he added. "I am editing a group of papers for the Party—I mean of course the National-Socialist Party. I also do the dramatic and musical criticism, without extra pay."

"Do you like it?" I asked.

"I hate it," he replied, vehemently. "But there is no other way to live. I must conform or starve. I——"

Suddenly he broke off, jumped to his feet and, tiptoeing swiftly across the room, snatched the door open. Nobody was there, and L. returned to his seat with a rather sheepish smile. "You never know nowadays," he said, as he drew the chair closer to mine so that he might talk in tones the sharpest ear, pressed however closely to the keyhole, could not catch.

F. S.

THE PARIS EXHIBITION

THE Eiffel Tower, incarnadined by flood-lighting, with showers of gold and silver stars cascading from all over its svelte skeleton; and springing out of the Seine in front of it more rockets and clusters of toy-balloons and fountains like white cypresses and veering ostrich-plumes of smoke, while the air is voluminous with the music of Honegger or Debussy—this is a prodigality of light and movement and sound which alone would make the Paris Exhibition unforgettable. Then there are hundreds of pavilions built by every nation and industry to parade their products or their pride. And finally, by the side of all that is transitory and ephemeral, an unparalleled display of painting, sculpture, tapestry, silver and enamel and gold, fifteen hundred years of French art, representing the most permanent creations of the mind and heart. I have a taste myself for exhibitions, I like them for being theatrical and short-lived, grandiose and absurd, and this is the most prodigious of all exhibitions, but even the most unfrivolous persons must be interested in Paris, for here you can see the noblest works of art, the most recent discoveries in science, and also a microcosm of the world with its conflicting aims and ideologies.

The art requires separate description. The churches of France have sent their sculptures and reliquaries, England her

Claudes and Poussins, Russia her Chardins, Germany her Watteaus, America her Impressionists. This is the most impressive and magnificent art-exhibition that I have ever seen. Moreover in the Petit Palais there is an exhibition of Maillol, Matisse, Picasso, Bonnard, Braque, Rouault, and all the artists of the pre-war generation. Some of the painters are ill represented—Picasso, for instance, has been put in the corner, perhaps because he is not a Frenchman—but here all the same you can attempt an estimate of the major artists of our time. Then there is a show at the *Arts Décoratifs* in the Pavillon Marsan of the Louvre representing *Le Décor de la Vie* 1900–1925, fashionable portraits, furniture, clothes, jewels—all most amusing if you are interested in the history of taste. The *Grand Palais* has been transformed into a more modern and more elegant rival to the Munich Deutsches Museum: all the sciences here display their power and charm. Here is a machine for making parlour thunderstorms, a living heart beating in a bottle, a room devoted entirely to fifty yards of the decimal reduction of π. I goggled, became exhausted, fled. But it is an amazing and no doubt instructive display. Then there is a museum of museography, with an exhibition of Van Gogh shown as an example of how pictures should be presented. This seemed to me lamentable, but is no doubt useful for persuading people that they understand painting when they don't. And I would prefer the sleepy dust of the dowdiest provincial museum to this distracting explosion of quotations, photographs, and reproductions. The paintings, moreover, are no longer fresh enough to support white frames. Goodness knows that some of our museums need to be made more attractive, but I hope that no go-ahead director will return from Paris determined to make a splash by imitating this exhibition.

I wrote last week about the British Pavilion, and must now try to summarise the impressions left on me by its fellows. A grumbling critic might say that the Exhibition as a whole looks rather like the congeries of factories on the Great West Road: almost every building is in the severely geometrical modern style, steel and glass and plaster. And it comes as rather a relief to find in the Colonial section the red *pisé de terre* of the French Soudan and the elegant *Empire* pastiche of the Martinique Pavilion. But at night the whole Exhibition grows fantastic and delightful. Germany, Russia and Italy are the countries which have spent most money. The interior of Italy is quite tasteful, the exterior much less good than some Italian architects could have made it. Germany is massive, and has on its roof a restaurant as excellent as it is expensive from which you get the best available view of the illuminations. Inside the display is surprisingly ineffective and ugly: a racing Mercedes is almost the only good-looking exhibit. The Russian Pavilion is equally grandiose, and even more saddening, because one expected more. On top of it two colossal figures in the Selfridge style are striding over the edge of a precipice, and the interior, apart from a vast model of the new Palace of the Soviets, a building far larger, far more columnated and far more vulgar even than our new Bank of England, is notable chiefly for hundreds of statues, paintings, photographs and embroideries of Stalin. (This is the more striking as I noticed in the rival establishments only a brace of Mussolinis and hardly any Hitlers.) Moreover, in the cinema attached to the Pavilion I saw a documentary film about the recent Polar Flight, which ended with a view of the welcome given not to the great Russian heroes, or the great Communist heroes, but to the great Stalinite heroes. This idolisation of Stalin may be good for interior consumption, but will any Western Communist maintain that it is suitable for exportation? In pleasing contrast to the Pavilions of these great Powers are those of the small Northern countries. Sweden, Norway, Denmark and Finland have excellent buildings, with well-arranged interiors, full of agreeable unpretentious objects, and including exhibits descriptive of their social services. Belgium has a good exterior, so has Japan (but the interior is a nightmare), Spain has a huge terrifying picture by Picasso of Guernica, to which the Vatican responds inadequately with an altar-piece by Sert. The Czechoslovak Pavilion has walls entirely of glass, Poland is lively, in Hungary you drink admirable Tokay, the U.S.A. has a fine tall building, not yet open, and the walls of Mexico have not yet been built. If one is to judge the nations by the accounts they give of themselves at the Paris Exhibition, there is no doubt that the Scandinavian countries would win the palm.

I have said nothing of the French village, built in the various regional styles with some good exhibits and restaurants where you can enjoy local dishes and vintages; of the amusement-park in which you can launch yourself into the void attached to a parachute; of the Pavillon de la Lumière, which contains a painting by Dufy said to be the largest ever made; or of the various pavilions devoted to electricity, wireless, refrigeration, indiarubber, glass, wine, wood, watering-places and education. There is a planetarium, an aquarium, a most elegant monument to the Blue Riband of the Atlantic, and a number of cafés on houseboats. There is a vast museum given up to books and newspapers, with admirably arranged exhibits illustrating the life and work of some of the greatest French writers. There is a Peace Pavilion, which displays very effectively the horrors of war, the advantages of peace, and the value of the League of Nations. There are some thirty entrances, and there are motors, launches and invalid-chairs for the exhausted. Indeed there is such a fabulous and fascinating display that after five days everywhere sight-seeing, I long to go back and see more. Four new museums will remain as permanent results of the Exhibition. But it must be said that the real hero of this extraordinary raree-show, the colossus which dwarfs everything else, which reduces even the massive pavilions of Germany and Russia to toy houses, is the Eiffel Tower, which was built forty-eight years ago, and which remains the most impressive and lucid architectural monument of the last hundred years.

RAYMOND MORTIMER

OPERA AT CAMBRIDGE

THE delightful new Arts Theatre with its weekly repertory is a great acquisition to Cambridge. It has enabled the Sadler's Wells opera and ballet companies to pay visits to Cambridge, and last week there was a production of opera which gave music lovers an opportunity of becoming acquainted with two little-known works, namely, Thomas Arne's ballad-opera, *Thomas and Sally*, and Mozart's singspiel, *Der Schauspieldirektor* (*The Impresario*). Thomas Arne (1710–1778) is best known as the composer of "Rule Britannia," but few are aware that this song is the finale of a masque entitled, appropriately enough, *Alfred*, performed on August 1st, 1740, at Cliveden, to celebrate the anniversary of the accession of the House of Hanover to the English throne.

Arne is probably the most important English opera composer since Purcell, and he was an exceptionally gifted musician whose songs, after about a hundred years of much popularity, are duly neglected to-day in spite of their true though simple melodic beauty. *Thomas and Sally*, which was first performed in Dublin in 1759, is a fair specimen of his powers as an operatic composer and, coming as it does more than twenty years after *The Beggar's Opera*, it may be taken as a good example of the fully developed English genre of ballad-opera. It makes a charming entertainment; the music, though straightforward and simple, consisting almost entirely of airs, is sufficiently sensitive and fresh in its melodiousness to retain its attractiveness. The first thing that strikes one on hearing it to-day is its lack of ensemble writing. Arne, like every other English opera composer, can only write songs. There are certainly several choruses, but of very elementary construction from a musical point of view, and there is an attempt at a duet which consists chiefly of a mere alternation of the voices with a kind of brief *stretta*. The second point—which was made all the sharper by the contrast provided by the succeeding Mozart opera—is the simple instrumentation. The horns are

nicely used here and there, but the wood-wind is entirely neglected by the composer, although in this respect he was representative of his age, not in England alone but all over the Continent.

Hearing *Thomas and Sally* before *The Impresario* put one exactly into the position of the average opera-goer of the period of the adult Mozart, so that one was able to appreciate the shock Mozart's music gave to his contemporaries. One could understand at once how the Emperor Joseph II complained that there were too many notes in *Die Entführung*, and how it was that Dittersdorf should have complained of Mozart's heavy orchestration. Apart from Gluck it might be said that Mozart was the first composer to be aware of the possibilities of the wood-wind instruments in the orchestra—oboes, bassoons and clarinets especially. But not only was his instrumentation very much richer than that of any opera composer who had preceded him, he was also musically very much more developed. His contemporaries continually complained that he was an obscure, complex and difficult composer; and of this fact *The Impresario* following *Thomas and Sally* provides a startling example.

The Impresario was composed by Mozart in 1786 during the period when he was composing *Figaro*. It consists of only five numbers, the overture, two arias, a trio and a final ensemble, but what music! As Professor Dent rightly says it is all "of the finest quality" and of a richness and elaboration which even to-day astonishes the hearers. After the simple arias of Arne, Mozart's two arias for the rival sopranos hardly seem to belong to the same century, while the trio is a perfect example of Mozart's capacity to write dramatic concerted music for voices, a capacity which far surpassed that of any of his gifted predecessors and which has never since been equalled or even rivalled.

Although the orchestra at the Arts Theatre was small—it cannot have exceeded twenty, if it even amounted to so many—it was of good quality and was very well conducted by Mr. Boris Ord. The singers were also good. Miss Ruth Naylor, who took the part of Mrs. Heartfelt, is a familiar name to the frequenters of Sadler's Wells and she was excellently balanced by Miss Margaret Field-Hyde as Mrs. Silvertone, so that the Impresario's predicament in having to choose between them was as real as it is intended to be. Mr. Morgan Jones had an exacting task as the Impresario, Mr. Buskin, and fulfilled it well, better than I had expected from his somewhat stiff performance as the Squire in *Thomas and Sally*. The music in this piece was only a small part of the original entertainment, but Mr. Eric Blom, the well-known music critic, has provided an English libretto which scraps all the irrelevant dramatic parody of the original and provides a framework for Mozart's music adhering to his original plot. He has done this extremely well and the result is that in this version *The Impresario* is a perfect miniature opera for three singers lasting about forty minutes. I strongly recommend it to Mr. John Christie and Dr. Fritz Busch for Glyndebourne, as it would make a perfect piece to go with Berlioz's *Beatrice and Benedict*, which, unfortunately, we cannot hope to hear at the Arts Theatre, Cambridge, as the orchestra pit is probably too small to accommodate the necessary orchestra. W. J. TURNER

PLAYS AND PICTURES

Rouault at the Mayor Gallery

Rouault is now among the five or six most firmly established living painters. He has not the extraordinary imagination of Picasso or the prodigious inventiveness in colour of Matisse, or the dazzling accomplishment of either of these masters. In colour and feeling he can be reproached not unfairly with monotony, and his art has not strikingly developed with the years. But he has a personal vision of the world which is poetic and intensely expressive. He can best be compared with such writers as Léon Bloy, Bernanos and Mauriac. His work seems the fruit of an exasperated Catholicism, dangerously close to the Jansenist and Manichaean hatred of life. The circus and the law-courts, Golgotha and the brothel, provide subjects which become almost indistinguishable beneath his brush. His paintings, whether in oil or in gouache, are low in key but velvety and translucent, like the more opaque sort of early Gothic stained glass. To the uneducated eye they may seem obtrusively ugly, but in fact they are very exquisite: the *matière* is exceedingly precious, the composition at once grave and incisive. The small exhibition at the Mayor Gallery includes examples of all periods of Rouault, and is especially welcome as he is still too little known in England. Once you have acclimatised your eye to the richly sombre world of his invention, you discover in it plastic and imaginative qualities of a high and tragic order, comparable even with the fearful splendours of Goya's grotesques.

"The Island," at the "Q" Theatre

There is nothing so trying to even the most perfect character as the feeling that your immediate world is on top of you. The small garrison on the Island belongs to the type, sometimes unkindly generalised as Anglo-Indian, which is called upon more often than not to endure such circumstances. It is one of the truest observations of the play that the type as a whole wins through at the cost, as a rule, of something vital, so that we should expect Renée, because she belongs to a class that is brought up to behave well, to return to duty after the *crise de nerfs* that her supposed lapse brings in its train. The actual incident of that lapse, though dramatically effective, seems less credible from a psychological point of view. It is surely odd for the gloomy major, whose wife has been in a mental home for fifteen years, to be so overcome by her death that his reaction to the sympathy of his favourite lieutenant's young bride is to make love to her; but curiously enough the situation rings true on the stage, partly due to the restraint and simplicity of Mr. Ian Swinley and Miss Sara Erskine. The latter is a distinct find, and both she and Mr. Geoffrey Wardwell as her husband—a part that might well in less accomplished hands prove awkward and sentimental—give fresh and sensitive performances. The decorations of the piece, a couple of Mrs. Hawksbees, a Colonel with a tartish wife, the husband's drunken Jonathan, are well touched in, while a special word of praise must go to Miss Norah Howard, whose genial vulgarian of a doctor's wife is a tower of strength, whenever she appears. Dr. Hodge has a winner here. It has plenty of meat and plenty of amusement; the dialogue is easy and the situations natural. The first scene is rather long, and that between the young husband and his Jonathan a bit maudlin, but these are faults easily corrected.

"The Fight's On," at the Richmond Theatre

Unluckily for this farce, the plot cannot fail to remind you of *Private Lives*. The quartet, the clever pair, the stupid pair, the "Change Partners," the continuous bickering, and the sempiternal cigarette—everything is here except Mr. Noel Coward's prodigious deftness. The play has a lot of good lines, and is considerably more entertaining than some recent successes, but requires to be differently produced. The more a play resembles a charade, the more urgent its need of super-slick production. The acting is remarkably good. Mr. Hugh Sinclair and Miss Valerie Taylor contrive to be both glamorous and comic, and play their sentimental interludes very sensitively; Miss Antoinette Cellier is odious with spirit, Mr. Eric Stuart is stupid with charm. (And his torso is Weissmullerishly magnificent). The negroes in the cast act grandly, but are too often inaudible. *The Fight's On* goes to Golders Green next week, and will presumably arrive eventually in the West End. We shall then revisit it, in the hope that a first-rate cast will have found in the interval a producer to do them justice.

THE COMING WEEK

FRIDAY, August 6th—
Ben Jonson Tercentenary. "Every Man in His Humour," Stratford-on-Avon.

SATURDAY, August 7th—
Promenade Concerts (to October 2nd), Queen's Hall.

SUNDAY, August 8th—
International African Service Bureau. Mass Meeting in Trafalgar Square to present the case of the Trinidad and Barbadoes strikers. Speakers: C. L. R. James, George Padmore. 3 p.m.

MONDAY, August 9th—
"Juno and the Paycock," Haymarket.
"Yes and No," Intimate.

Current Literature

BOOKS IN GENERAL

It may be improper to draw an elaborate parallel between toads and dons, further than to remark that with an unpromising exterior they both sometimes bear a precious jewel in their heads; but I certainly never hear of the toad whose toes have grown long and whose mouth has been closed by a prolonged sojourn in the rock without thinking of some of my University friends. They, like the toad, have absorbed a certain local colouring; some of their faculties have become cramped from long disuse; and as the shape of the toad's domicile might be inferred from an inspection of his person, so I fancy that I can distinguish in some men not only the University but even the particular college to which they have belonged. In one figure I can distinctly trace the marks left by a chapel of pure mediaeval architecture; in another I can make out the influence of a lawn admirably adapted for croquet; and, without being hypercritical, the contour of a third speaks to me with an irresistible force of a certain excellent college kitchen and cellar.

THE quotation above gives an excellent idea of the delightfully easy, bantering tone of the *Sketches from Cambridge* with which Leslie Stephen made his bow before the London public in the *Pall Mall Gazette* when he gave up his career as a tutor at Trinity Hall because, after having taken Holy Orders, he found himself becoming an agnostic. The sketches were published as a volume in 1865, and a new edition with an introduction by G. M. Trevelyan, O.M., was reissued last autumn (Oxford, 2*s.* 6*d.*). Mr. Desmond MacCarthy, in the Leslie Stephen lecture which he delivered at Cambridge in May and which has now been published (Cambridge, 2*s.*), laid stress on the lasting influence of Cambridge on Leslie Stephen's habits of thought. Leslie Stephen was in his own words a toad that had passed fourteen years in a block of coal and had been moulded by his own particular cranny. Since Mr. MacCarthy was at Cambridge and was lecturing at his old University, he was naturally thinking of the good qualities; of the jewels in the Cambridge head: logical thinking, dislike of humbug, "of futile enthusiasms and gushing sentimentalisms," and other "fads generated by that estimable entity the soul," which as Leslie Stephen wrote, "they knew at Cambridge should be kept in its proper place." But these admirable qualities, essential to a pursuit of ethics and mathematics and philosophy, result in the faculties which are perhaps most needed in a literary critic becoming cramped by long disuse. Leslie Stephen, quite rightly in my opinion, wrote disparagingly of literary criticism. He was not very well fitted for it and he was wasted on it.

* * *

The literary critic, in my opinion, is a not very valuable parasite whose usefulness is largely that of an indicator: the public must be able to rely on him when he turns red or blue, as the chemist relies on litmus paper. He must be an interpreter with hypertrophy of the sympathetic system. It is far more important that he should not miss the point than that he should make logically faultless statements, or spend his time torturing the great literature of the world to fit a framework of aesthetic theory—though this is an exercise which has made its appearance at Cambridge since Leslie Stephen's day. But I think that the influence of Cambridge was to make Leslie Stephen feel that it was safer to concentrate on the author rather than on the author's work. He was primarily interested in literature as a medium of self-revelation, and as Mr. MacCarthy says:

> The critic who approaches his subjects in this spirit will inevitably discourse more about human nature and morals than about art, and Leslie Stephen is the least aesthetic of noteworthy critics.

He could scarcely be other since he believed that "the whole art of criticism consists in learning to know the human being who is partially revealed to us in his spoken or his written words." This naturally led him to consider that an author's sincerity was the first essential quality, lacking which he was worthless. Leslie Stephen is therefore not at home with whimsical fanciful writers who say pretty things because they are pretty. Given sincerity, Leslie Stephen values an author by his ideas. He is often most interesting when he is dealing with some writer whose work is mediocre but who represented certain ideas. Thus the essay on Kingsley is far more interesting than that on Sterne. In his essay on George Eliot, whom he acclaims as one of the greatest of English novelists, of unmistakable high genius, who "we are confident will give delight to our grandchildren however the reputation of other novelists may fade," he shows clearly that it was her ideas which particularly appealed to him, and which he expects to appeal to us, and he adds:

> I am very glad when Fielding or Thackeray puts his puppets aside for the moment to talk to me in his own person. A child, it is true, dislikes to have the illusion broken, and is angry if you try to persuade him that Giant Despair was not a real person like his favourite, Blunderbore. But the attempt to produce such illusions is really unworthy of work intended for full-grown readers.

The last sentence should be read and pondered by anyone who is prepared to adopt Leslie Stephen as a guide to fiction. I cannot help thinking the fourteen years at Cambridge are to blame.

* * *

The importance Leslie Stephen attached to getting to know the character of an author, and his fondness for discovering ideas everywhere, are what made him so admirable a biographer. The first explains why his *Johnson* in the English Men of Letters Series is so good. Getting to know a man well means knowing his faults, and Leslie Stephen was never tempted to falsify. In discussing Boswell he says:

> It is unscientific to consider a man as a bundle of separate good and bad qualities, of which one-half may be concealed without injury to the rest. Johnson's fits of bad temper, like Goldsmith's blunderings, must be unsparingly revealed by the biographer, because they are, in fact, expressions of the whole character. . . . We should not do justice to Johnson's intense tenderness, if we did not see how often it was masked by an irritability. . . . To bring out the beauty of a character by means of its external oddities is the triumph of a kindly humorist.

But Leslie Stephen, though full of humour, was temperamentally more interested in men's ideas than in their eccentricities. At twenty-five I remember thinking that *The English Utilitarians* was an intensely exciting book because he had made the thought of Bentham and James and John Stuart Mill really alive. To make opinions appear interesting and plausible, which were being exploded by events taking place all around even at the time when they were held, was a remarkable feat.

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But there is no doubt that Leslie Stephen is at his best when he is putting forward his own opinions. Mr. MacCarthy says that the *Essays on Free-thinking and Plain Speaking* and *An Agnostic's Apology* are the most important part of his life work. His experience fitted him to be the guide of a generation which was entangled in the struggle between orthodoxy and free-thought. The essay called *An Agnostic's Apology*, which I have just read for the first time, could not be better, and I do not think anyone whose belief is based on reason, and not instinct, could disagree with it. It simply explodes orthodox Christianity with "its endless shufflings from the horrible to the meaningless." He brings out in particular the hopeless contradictions involved in the doctrine of free will, a device by which theologians try to relieve God of the responsibility for the sufferings of creation and which enables God to be the judge of his handiwork. Some of Leslie Stephen's arguments are delightfully concise:

> The motive which persuades us to believe in the good arrangement hereafter is precisely the badness of this. Such a motive to believe cannot itself be a reason for belief. That would be to believe because belief was unreasonable.

Cambridge may perhaps claim part of the merit, but not all. Leslie Stephen's value is really that he is the best example of the loftiness of the Victorian attitude; a wind from the mountains with the savour of snow water from the glaciers and alpine flowers, welcome enough in our low-lying marshes.

DAVID GARNETT

NEW NOVELS

Neptune Beach. By DANIEL FUCHS. *Constable.* 7s. 6d.
Interval Before Birth. By N. S. LEITCH. *Heinemann.* 7s. 6d.
Divide the Desolation. By KATHRYN J. MACFARLANE. *Harrap.* 8s. 6d.
Perry's Cows. By MARGARET ILES. *Gollancz.* 7s. 6d.
Musical Chains. By EUGENIA WAKE. *Constable.* 7s. 6d.

There is a class of novel reader—and I suspect they are the majority—who like to have imaginary social relationships with the characters of fiction. But half the world is unpresentable to the other half, and these readers do not like unpleasant characters because they would be tiresome at tea and unpresentable at dinner. A more intelligent protest comes from those readers who would prefer you not to write about the unpleasant or worthless, but who point out that if you do, it is better to write with sympathy than with monotonous scorn. This is very true, and would have greater force if one found novels about pleasant people subjected to the same rigid moral criticism that is directed to novels about the unpleasant. If they did receive such scrutiny one would find that many pleasant novels are very unpleasant indeed; for the realistic unpleasant novel at least disposes of a lot of implicit philosophical bunk or vague wish-poetry before it starts. This, *Neptune Beach* has done. It is not a great novel; behind it, as in most tough novels, there is a remote but discernible aura of sentimentality. But it makes the other books in this list merely well-meaning and superfluous. The beach is one of those unpleasant bungaloid resorts outside New York, and the people are summer shopkeepers, salesmen, soda-jerkers, cash-desk girls, garage hands, respectable brothel keepers, racketeers and hi-jackers. Their peculiar unpleasantness is due to their appalling preoccupation with money. You stroke a girl's knee in the cinema and reflect that the evening has cost you two dollars fifty already. Human feeling may swell in the heart but it has all got to be pushed through the competitive money sieve, and by the time it is expressed it amounts to nothing more than mingy lust, the lechery of the eight-hour day. No one has heard of mercy, adventure is reduced to the vicarious excitements of betting and the cinema, marriage is a device for furnishing a flat, hatred and murder are deprived of passion and are whittled down to mere items in the go-getter's catalogue.

I have turned *Neptune Beach* into a tract, but Mr. Fuchs is one of the most expert of the American reporting school; he has the astonishing patter to perfection, and he lets these frightful people talk and live their story in their own way, without comment. There is not a word too many. Madame Pavlovna, from the corset shop, comes into the soda fountain for her glass of orange juice:

> "Veder," sighed Madame Pavlovna, smiling languidly, "Who cares vat the veder is? Vun day is like another. If you have seen vun day you say you may have seen them all!"

Shorty, the soda-jerker, an expert at dating up dames, proceeds to the seduction of Madame Pavlovna:

> "No, on the level Mrs. Pavlovna, don't you know? Now you take a young kid. What the hell does she know about life? You know? Just a kid. A man don't feel right in her company, he don't like to take advantage! He don't know what to do. A real woman, on the other hand, she's familiar with life. She knows what to expect. When, you know, things come to a certain turn, why hell, she's prepared to meet the situation. And if she feels okay about it, then hell, okay. And if she don't have the inclination well, hell, that's another story . . ."

But Madame Pavlovna is a disappointment to Shorty. She is always platonic at the "hell, okay" stage. Their hot-handed idyll, with its illiterate and delicious love letters, relieves the strain of the tale of the worries of Mr. Spitzbergen, whose greed has got him into the clutches of a vice racketeer, and the mad passion of Karty with his safe system for horses. At the top of the pyramid of people is the pathetic, fat Shubunka, who is being hi-jacked out of his nice little prostitution business. A bigger organisation is doing him down and thugs are after him. "It isn't human," he protests. Faint messages of civilisation come to this waddling old exploiter of lust; he longs to be liked, he looks bewildered and in vain for some sign of disinterested friendship. He offers his watch to the thugs who have come to beat him up, not entirely as a bribe but as a testimony of the feeling of one human being for another. In a mean, gaudy world where all values are falsified by the respectable, it is the criminals who attain a kind of saintliness. The book has the fascination of the exotic, its humour is rich and its pathos lies in the muddled, weak kindliness of people who are living on one of the dust-heaps of a gimcrack civilisation. One might put "Formidable Indictment" at the end of Mr. Fuchs' rich comedy, and certainly, if you are looking for political literature, *Neptune Beach* is the real thing about people as they are under the contemporary degradation of values in the towns, and without a word of politics in it.

Interval before Birth is about people as they are not. A group of gifted persons take an old house in a town in the south of France and we are shown their relationship with some of the peasants. The book is a fair example of the *faux bon* of the Charles Morgan kind, slow moving and pretentiously literary in feeling. One does not expect, of course, the cultivated people to talk as racily as the "wise guys" of Mr. Daniel Fuchs, but one expects them to talk like cultivated people. Not having the consolation or escape of working themselves to the bone in a rotten world, the sensitive rich may experience more excruciating pangs of spiritual frustration, greater refinements of irony; but are fated to have interpreters who think beautiful or solemn words automatically describe beautiful or serious situations. The present slump in sensitive character to the advantage of the bright and the tough is largely due to the emotional pretences and clichés of the "nice" novelists.

Divide the Desolation deals with the lives of the Brontës. There is nothing false about it, and I suppose if you think it is important or necessary to put the domestic life at Haworth Parsonage into the form of a novel, Miss Macfarlane's is the estimable way. There are the damp sheets, the cold passages, the consumptive coughings. It is all only too true. There is no fault to find with her clear pictures of the "meteoric" Branwell, the timid Anne, the bossy Charlotte or the fey, hard person of Emily, except that any biographer will tell you as much. A novel of this kind unflatteringly suggests that one is incapable of understanding the silences of biography, repeats the trite drama and fills up with the tedious. The best that one can say about *Divide the Desolation* is that, as a novel, it does nothing preposterous, no undocumented motives are suggested and its end, with Charlotte looking at the empty chairs, is really very moving and eerie. But the historical material which anyone can get out of the *Letters* and the *Lives* is much more vivid and moving, for Miss Macfarlane has more industry than temperament. Novelists write their own life stories in their work, and I have yet to read the outsider who makes as good a job of it.

Musical Chains and *Perry's Cows* complete this week's dirge. The former is simply written and easily read. It is about a young peasant who is discovered to be a pianist of genius but who has to struggle against tuberculosis. The conflict between art and health begins interestingly and is adroitly displayed. One is mildly stirred to turn the page and go on, but the progress is merely to more mildness. Margaret Iles' book is, by contrast, a muddle with an unusual character in the middle of it. He is an Essex-Cockney dairy farmer, crafty, quarrelsome, boasting, the born despair of the Milk Marketing Board and of the Utopian politician. But he is one of those characters who, though well observed and drawn presumably from life, do not expand when transplanted into fiction; and he and his enemies, though they talk well, are tantalising and, in the end, dreary shapes. The background, bungaloid Essex, flooded, ramshackle and penurious, has its points.

V. S. PRITCHETT

ART *VERSUS* STATE

The Seven Soviet Arts. By KURT LONDON. *Faber and Faber.* 15s.
Prometheus and the Bolsheviks. By JOHN LEHMANN. *Cresset Press.* 12s. 6d.

"On the whole," regrets Herr London of concerts in Western Europe compared with those in Russia, "on the whole, entertainment is preferred to edification."

There are so many books about Russia that this unwholesome preference is apt to intrude even on them, and to those who share it I can recommend a simple rule of selection, which is to be careful of any book containing the words "Tsarist" or "Tsarism." A writer who uses these words, though he may not be a parrot, is certain to sound like one; and he proclaims himself as dangerously ignorant of the Russian past. For Bolshevism is one of the most singular phenomena in history, and to analyse it correctly without reference to that past is difficult and generally impossible.

Both these books employ the fatal words, and both fail badly in entertainment. But had I thrown them out of the train, though the journey might have been less tiring, I should have missed some important edification.

Not from Mr. Lehmann, though. "The children's procession was a very delightful affair: this time I had full access to all parts of it, and went round with my camera continually snapping, to the embarrassed pleasure of the children themselves." But for one chapter about the history of Georgia, it is all on this level. There is nothing to complain of; in fact one feels that Mr. Lehmann must be one of the nicest persons living. But though the style of a rural dean eulogising the work of women's institutes in the diocesan magazine may excite those of the true faith, it is caviare to the heathen; and when the dear man takes fire, crying of his saviour Stalin that he "inspires a sinking feeling, not unlike terror, in thousands of nervous breasts in the better-class suburbs of the European capitals," the breast of the sinner grows nervous indeed. I respect Mr. Lehmann, and I envy him his journeys in Georgia. But he is very embarrassing.

Herr London, at first, is more confused than embarrassing. He gives himself the worst possible credentials: phrases such as "the intellectual wilderness which was the former realm of the Tsars," advertise his historical equipment; and his bile in speaking of the West has the yellowness of personal frustration:

> Since the masses of the people find few ideal or material opportunities to occupy themselves with art, while the middle classes are descending to the economic level of the proletariat, and finally the remaining elements of the bourgeoisie and aristocracy are mostly too tired or degenerate to patronise art intensively, art dealers have two resources left to them: sensation and entertainment.

Nevertheless, as the reader soon discovers, it is the standards of this disgusting society which constitute, for all his hate of it, Herr London's measuring-rod.

"Many of my readers will agree with me in saying that the promotion of intellectual life, of arts and sciences, is far more backward in the so-called capitalistic countries than in the Soviet Union. I am not speaking of results achieved . . ." Yet it is precisely of these results that the author comes to speak, revealing a well-balanced critical faculty which, once it is divorced from social problems and applied to works of art, informs the latter half of the book with serious authority. The moral of his observations is that when art is free it will be good, and that when it is enslaved to the State it will be bad. And the question he poses is whether, while the patrons of art are the masses and its motto is edification, it can ever be free or good.

The present reaction against modernism was already blowing up at the beginning of the present decade. In 1936 it reached full force with the foundation of the Central Art Committee, which now exercises ideological supervision over Music, Painting, Theatre, Sculpture, Architecture and Applied Arts, and over all museums and exhibitions, throughout the Union. The official view of art, to which this Committee gives expression, is Herr London's central theme. It is much the same view as Hitler holds now and the Kaiser held before him. But what Herr London omits to explain is the psychological circumstance that gave rise to it in Russia, namely that modernism was associated in the public mind with a period of material suffering, and had become, as I discovered in 1935, a focus of real popular detestation. Otherwise his account is of the fullest, excellently documented with such examples as the official attack on Shostakovitch, and completely honest in its judgments. "Is *this* the meaning of proletarian architecture? Must this petty bourgeois tawdriness be used to conceal the real purpose of an underground station, instead of letting the purpose make its effect with simple, beautiful forms and materials? Must galleries of marble pillars, mosaic walls, and rich chandeliers . . . be used to parade their prosperity before the eyes of Metro-users?" This is a little unkind, because it again takes no account of the psychological motive. But it is very refreshing, after all the meaningless exordiums that have been heaped on that arty little railway by Russians and foreigners alike. And it is refreshing, too, to find that Herr London is not the parrot he so laboriously pretends to be. He has provided, in fact, the first authoritative statement on the fate of art under Stalin, and his book, if read as a sequel to Réné Fülop-Miller's *Mind and Face of Bolshevism*, is of primary importance to the understanding of modern Russia.

Herr London deals at length with the life and organisation of the individual artists. On the one hand, he emphasises the remarkable fact that from an early age every artist—that is to say, almost anyone who cares to proclaim himself as such—is sheltered from the material worries of life, endowed with a permanent income, placed in an apartment where he is surrounded by other artists, and furnished, in sum, with the maximum of privilege that the Union can offer. On the other hand, he insists that this same artist is not, as in the West, an isolated egotistical individual lacking in social conscience and dependent for his living on the whims of decadent patrons, but an integral part of the State machinery, in close touch with the realities of life, the "mediator between his particular art and the people." That I agree, is what an artist should be, once the people are sufficiently educated to enjoy art. But how the artist can succeed in that rôle when his life is such as Herr London describes, it is difficult to imagine. All he can learn at present, all it is safe for him to learn, is to give the people what it likes. In that he compares with Mr. Selfridge, and if you want to know what Russian art has sunk to, there is still time to take another walk up Oxford Street before the decorations are dismantled.

ROBERT BYRON

COSTA BRAVA

Hotel in Spain. By NANCY JOHNSTONE. *Faber and Faber.* 8*s.* 6*d.*

Volunteer in Spain. By JOHN SUMMERFIELD. *Lawrence and Wishart.* 2*s.* 6*d.*

These books reflect two entirely different points of view. Mrs. Johnstone runs a hotel at Tossa for English tourists, John Summerfield has been fighting with the International Brigade. One loves Spain, the other Communism. I remember Mrs. Johnstone's hotel very well. Motoring from Carcassonne and getting to Tossa late in the evening we were rather appalled at the conviction of everybody we consulted, in the dusky main street, that the best place to stay was the "Casa Ingles"—we imagined the usual horrors of an English hotel, inefficiency, unfriendliness, fear of the human voice, disastrous cooking and servility, and prepared to face the glarers and growlers who always look as if they had heard one was coming and hoped there was still time to prevent it. Instead we found a charming white box on the top of a little hill, an extremely hospitable welcome, and an excellent dinner; afterwards there was a delicious evening in a German bar, under a spreading vine. This is described in the book, and so is the Austrian who took us there, and Rovira, the most typical Catalan I have come across in a book, and the elusive Frank Jellinek, whom I next met on the crowded Ramblas. There was no room at all in Tossa that summer, and we had to leave the next day, but the hotel and its owners remained as a picture of what people could create with a vocation. One year there was nothing, the next that neat, white box on the hill, looking over one of the most beautiful landscapes in the world—a curving bay, with its ruined castle and fishing village, behind it an isolated conch of greenness enclosed by high pine-clad hills; and the box hummed with life as the two proprietors put their ideas of hotel-keeping into practice. Mr. Johnstone was writing:

> Do you like . . .
> . . . bowler hats? . . . Cannes? . . . drooping moustaches? . . . obsequious servants? . . . a week in lovely Lucerne? . . . Olde English Shoppes? . . . crowds? . . . organised amusements? . . . Eastbourne? . . . chromium-plated hotels? . . . The Monarch of the Glen? . . . tapioca? . . .
>
> If you do, please leave what follows to those who lack your nice appreciation of the Things That Always Have Been.
>
> In our opinion the Costa Brava is the loveliest, friendliest place in the sun, but we do not pretend to be objective about it,

and the folder, breaking apparently all the rules of advertising, found its way round the Fleet Street (he was a sub-editor of the *News Chronicle*) which he had just left. Most people with a sensual, social temperament have wanted to start a hotel and *Hotel in Spain* is an admirable record of how to do it. And it seems easy. But that is because Mrs. Johnstone, as I said, has a vocation—the site, the building, the builders, the installation, the cooking, publicity, the staff, the first guests—none of them present any real difficulty. She has an admirable gift for making the best of the conditions available, in her case Catalan workmen, English journalists, and German refugees; and the result was exactly the best hotel that it was possible to have in Tossa—better and it would have been empty, less good and it would have been no improvement on the excellent ones already there. What seems extraordinary on reading this book is the behaviour of the guests. I had no idea people wrote for pages of information before they

visited an hotel, that they sent out ultimata about tea and blankets, west-facing rooms, hot-water bottles, like old ladies in an early E. M. Forster novel. But apparently they do—" My sister must have a jug of barley water every morning." " I hope I shall not be lonely in Tossa : I am a widow but I like bridge. Can one buy a watch in Tossa ? " " We shall bring our electric iron with us, we never travel without it." " I still cannot decide whether to come now or wait for a month or two." " The type of letter that gladdened my heart when I opened it," writes Mrs. Johnstone, " was a type-written one, with the queries tabulated "—what queries ? One realises dimly why England is the happy home of travel agencies, why Thomas Cook was an Englishman—and why you can never run a hotel unless you can suffer fools gladly. It is because Mrs. Johnstone can that this is not a highbrow book. In fact, unless you share the day-dream and want to know what putting it into practice is like you will find it rather dull. For all Mrs. Johnstone's cheerful, chatty, realistic writing cannot hide the fact that such a book must in its nature be chiefly a record of small domestic problems wrestled with, and a chronicle of unrelated episodes centring round guests who come and go. Tossa was the last of the expatriate paradises, it developed when France and Italy were too expensive, and when Majorca had grown xenophobe (I remember watching unsuspecting English people pouring pesetas into the plate in the Cathedral after a sermon in which the Bishop had called on his strait-laced flock to set fire to the foreigners' houses and drive them into the sea.) The account of the revolution given by Mrs. Johnstone will not satisfy the fire-eaters, but it is obviously exactly what someone in her position, much liked by the local people, and in a small town hundreds of miles away from the fighting, and with no distress, would really see. It is to her credit that she doesn't pretend to have seen more. She tells a delicious story of the wounded feelings of the people of Tossa when an English warship was sent to rescue the tourists from them. They were soothed by the garage proprietor, who said with a shrug : " But the English Navy, it is always so hysterical." Meanwhile, with no guests, and not much money, and very little food, the hotel stays open :

> We have decided we like living under anarchism. So, despite the general exodus of foreign residents we have decided to stay here.
>
> For further information please apply to Casa Johnstone, Tossa da Mar.

Volunteer in Spain is a very different affair. Mrs. Johnstone's book belongs to the early part of the civil war, to anarchist Catalonia, where there were no Fascists within miles. She loves and understands the Spanish. John Summerfield was there to fight for an idea. Mrs. Johnstone's hotel depends on the outcome of that fighting. It is fortunate for us that he is also an excellent writer. His book is short, modest, and readable, and gives an admirable account of the sensations of fighting, a true picture of what war feels like, of fear, the death of friends, the noise of different kinds of projectiles, the dangers, and also the discomfort. He has one fault, which is a very tiresome imitation of Hemingway, when he is not being himself. Obviously Hemingway has mastered the art of writing about war, for he is able exactly to catch the note of sentimental heartiness which living an animal sort of life generates. But to write in the same way now is a trick, especially when you lack altogether the cynical attitude which is its complement. And, as usual, there are mistakes—how can the quays of Barcelona be full of " the girls, the lovely Andalusian blondes who walked so beautifully and smiled so disturbingly ; and they looked at us with heads held high and admiration in their large eyes, and we began to feel that we were pretty good "—and back in Andalusia ? " The men behind the table communicated to one another in a curious tongue. ' Catalunyan,' said John (he had been there, he knew)." But perhaps such objections are pedantic. Summerfield writes often hastily and with a certain shame of his own sensibility; he is a good Communist and permits no criticism of the conduct of affairs except an occasional grumble at the food and the heavy weights he had to carry. His book should be collated with *Single to Spain*, which deals with the same lot of people and the same events. Perhaps the truth lies in between them. But as a war narrative *Volunteer in Spain* is admirable, as befits the author of *Militiaman*, one of the best of all modern short stories :

> I have tried to write of the ordinary routine of our war rather than of heroism. There have been plenty of heroic deeds, but what I feel has been most worthy of admiration and respect in the men whom I was with has been their endurance and patience, their discipline and morale. It is these factors that win wars, not heroism ; and we did not come to Spain for the sake of romantic adventures, but to help win the war—not only from a sense of solidarity with the Spanish people, but because we all realised, whatever our political views, that the issues of this struggle are of significance for ourselves and the whole world ; they are the issues that the whole world is facing to-day, in laboratories and libraries as well as mines and factories, in armed struggle and in peaceful contemplation, in the whole of men's daily lives, a conflict that must decide in this century whether the enormous new powers that science has given to the human race are to be used for the organisation of decay or for life, for a mechanised barbarism or a new advance of the human spirit.

The book is dedicated to his friend, John Cornford.

CYRIL CONNOLLY

PRELUDE TO ROOSEVELT

A History of American Life. Vol. IX.—The Nationalising of Business, 1878-1898. By IDA M. TARBELL. *Macmillan.* 20s.

This new volume of a well-known series is a vivid and attractive piece of work. Few people know the business annals of America in the twenty years before the American war with Spain better than Miss Tarbell ; and she has used her knowledge to make at least the appearance of things a coherent and intelligible story.

The weakness of her book is that it does not dig very deep into the meaning of the period she describes. Miss Tarbell seems satisfied to assume that the immense expansion of American business could not have taken place unless racketeers like Gould and Rockefeller had been given elbow-room to build up their immense empires without any serious hindrance from the Federal or State Governments. But the truth surely is that in these years the foundations were grimly laid of almost all the evils President Franklin Roosevelt is now seeking to overcome. The farmer became the mortgagee of the banks ; manufacturers became the creatures of the banker and the speculative financier ; the Supreme Court developed the basis of its narrow construction of federal power ; the American trade unions became craft organisations failing to realise the importance of the semi-skilled and the unskilled. These were the years in which America still had the chance of evading the tragedies of European capitalism. It did not take that chance. It allowed big business to obtain a stranglehold upon the mechanisms of government so complete and so irresponsible that in the last forty years it has proved, so far, impossible to release the productive forces of the nation from its control. To Miss Tarbell the sheer romance of the achievement of these economic empire-builders seems to compensate for the habits they made indigenous in American life. An outsider will not find it so easy to accept that conclusion.

Corruption and violence were their natural weapons. The lawyer and the politician became their docile instruments. They made the State not an instrument of common purposes in the national life but a prostitute to their private lust for gain. The massacre at the Haymarket and in the Homestead strike, the misuse of the injunction in labour disputes, the fantastic dishonesty of railroad finance, the wholesale purchase of legislators and political parties, the general frenzy of speculation, these were the outcome of the unlimited operation of the profit-making motive. It is, no doubt, true that, as Miss Tarbell makes clear, they unified the American continent. But the price they exacted can be seen in the effort of President Roosevelt to introduce principles into an incoherent jungle of industrial empires which have become habituated to the notion that, where property is concerned, there is no such thing as principle. Mr. Carnegie and Mr. Rockefeller may have been able men. Their private lives may have been exemplary. But in their business careers, they not only acted like Renaissance bravos, they built an America in which it was assumed that such behaviour was amply justified so long as it was capable of success. The interest of the little man was largely lost sight of in the passionate struggle for power. Now, when the people of the United States seek, at long last, the reorganisation of the civilisation they built, they find that the inheritors of the traditions such men were able to build are prepared to defy any effort to drive paths of order through the jungle they dominate.

It is, at least, a fascinating story ; and, as Miss Tarbell describes it, little is lost of its excitement. In her next edition it is to be hoped that she will give more attention than she has done here both to the work of the Supreme Court and such agencies as the Interstate Commerce Commission. In particular, no history of this period is complete without some reference to the work of Edward Moseley, the first secretary of that Commission. The

history of his efforts to secure safety-legislation on the railroads is an epic that deserves to stand with the work of Shaftesbury and Plimsoll. That it should have encountered the antagonism it did is a sufficient commentary upon the men whose achievements Miss Tarbell narrates. It was not for nothing that the era she describes was followed by the reign of the muckrakers.

HAROLD J. LASKI

TOO DUMB

Dumb Witness. By AGATHA CHRISTIE. *Collins.* 7s. 6d.
Found Floating. By FREEMAN WILLS CROFTS. *Hodder and Stoughton.* 7s. 6d.
Death for Dear Clara. By Q. PATRICK. *Cassell.* 7s. 6d.
Hamlet, Revenge! By MICHAEL INNES. *Gollancz.* 7s. 6d.
Dames Don't Care. By PETER CHEYNEY. *Collins.* 7s. 6d.
Death of a Golfer. By ANTHONY WYNNE. *Hutchinson.* 7s. 6d.
Ill Met By Moonlight. By LESLIE FORD. *Collins.* 7s. 6d.

On the back of the cover of *Dumb Witness* is a photograph of a wire-haired terrier and a statement in red ink: "If it hadn't been for me, old Monsieur Poirot would never have solved this case. (Signed) Bob—the *not* so dumb witness!" On a flyleaf is a dedication: "To Dear Peter, most faithful of friends and dearest of companions, a dog in a thousand." So far, so bad. I have always been led to believe that goofiness over dogs addles the brains; and if Mrs. Christie's brain could ever become addled I reckon a wire-haired terrier would be the appropriate animal to do the trick. To begin with, why talk of terriers as *dumb* animals? Their own language in which they vociferate freely among themselves may be incomprehensible but is certainly deafening, and the language they talk to their mistresses with their heads cocked to one side is all too human and intimate for a cat-lover to appreciate. But there is an American quality of dumbness which I readily attribute to Mrs. Christie's dog. It is typical of such dumb creatures to claim credit for other people's performances, and the credit for solving the crime in *Dumb Witness* (if credit there be) goes not to Bob or Monsieur Poirot but to Mr. A. E. W. Mason for having written *The House of the Arrow* years ago. Frankly, the book is disappointing. Five persons are in the running for killing an old lady, and the circumstances are such that any one of them might be guilty. Poirot cross-examines the lot with his usual peristaltic technique, but the result of this digestive process is not what it should be, elimination, but constipation. We are left where we were, with five good suspects, and only the toss of a coin could decide between them, were it not for one little clue borrowed from Mr. Mason. Poirot and Mrs. Christie seem somewhat ashamed of this clue, as the final identification of the criminal is justified by some spurious psychological argument, unworthy of them both, and an attempt to pat Bob on the back. We shall be content to pat Mr. Mason.

The setting for the major part of Mr. Wills Crofts' *Found Floating* is an Hellenic cruise. Anyone who has been on such a cruise and yet not reached the bridge of the vessel will be interested in a detailed account in Crofts' best manner of the piloting of a 16,000-ton liner out of Cadiz harbour at low tide. The cruise is enlivened by the murder of a passenger while the ship is at Ceuta. Inspector French comes aboard at Marseilles and by the time we reach Malta the case is cleared up. I regret that French for once is so brisk, as I wanted to hear Mr. Crofts on the Bosphorus. As a detective work the story is defective for the usual Crofts reason, the essential evidence being kept back for the *dénouement*. This tedious formula only Mr. Crofts' talent for imparting dollops of practical information makes endurable, and when he enlarges on a subject with which the reader is already familiar it becomes a penance. It was my misfortune that I had already been on one cruise and wished never to go again—even with Mr. Crofts.

Mr. Q. Patrick generally manages to be exciting, but in *Death for Dear Clara* I miss the old reckless spirit. The scene is New York: a Society lady turned literary agent interviews a string of visitors one afternoon. Which of them killed her? Or was it some one else? The plot is adequate, if rather obvious; the writing conscientious, and the result a sound, mediocre detective story with nothing that the others haven't got.

Mr. Innes' first detective story, *Death at the President's Lodging*, was received in some quarters with a roar of applause. I'm preparing my roars for his third novel. His second, *Hamlet, Revenge!* is not quite worth a roar, although it improves on his first. There is an aroma of Miss Dorothy L. Sayers about Mr. Innes which many will find agreeable. Powerful, fluent, well-educated prose almost condescending, as it were, to act as vehicle for detection—that is the force at Mr. Innes' disposal. In *Hamlet, Revenge!* he follows Miss Sayers into the highest Society. A Prime Minister, a Lord Chancellor and a Duke take prominent parts; and minor Royalty are only prevented at the last moment from attending the ill-fated performance of *Hamlet* at Scamnum Court, staged by Giles Gott, don at St. Anthony's College, where the tragedy occurred in the President's lodging. Any account of the plot would spoil the dramatic values Mr. Innes so carefully establishes, but the disturbing element of international spies deserves some criticism. Spies should be taboo in pure detective work, because they introduce melodrama. If Mr. Innes will steer clear of the gangs in future and go gently with his upper-class charm, we ought to get something really good from him. In the meantime no one should miss *Hamlet, Revenge!* if they want some fun.

What will it be this time? is the question one asks every time Mr. Anthony Wynne produces a new miracle. This time, in *Death of a Golfer*, it is a North Country business-man, who is apparently stabbed while driving off from the first tee on his private golf course. The fatality is shown in four photographs on the dust cover, where it can be seen that the nearest onlookers are ten feet away. Dr. Eustace Hailey's explanation of this enigma is the maddest thing you ever read.

Ill Met By Moonlight is to my eyes an unpromising title, but Mr. Leslie Ford has a gift for producing tension reminiscent of Mrs. Mignon Eberhart. The plot is sound and rather exciting, while the criminal is almost too well-concealed. In fact, if there is a doubt about the book, it is whether there is enough evidence for the detection.

Mr. Cheyney's Lemmy Caution books are so slick and homogeneous that reviewing one is like trying to review an eel. *Dames Don't Care* slithers through the mind at such a pace that by the time you reach the end you blink and wonder what's happened. A bunch of tough guys got what was coming to them, if I have to guess.

RALPH PARTRIDGE

TRIPLE SHELL LUBRICATING OIL

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HILLMAN

PUBLIC AND PRIVATE SCHOOLS

Letters from Iceland. By W. H. AUDEN and LOUIS MACNEICE. *Faber and Faber.* 9*s.*

In a letter to "E.M.A.," in the middle of the book, Mr. Auden describes his and his collaborator's intention thus: "This letter . . . will be a description of an effect of travelling in distant places which is to make one reflect on one's past and one's culture from the outside. But will form a central thread on which I shall hang other letters to different people more directly about Iceland." Accordingly, the authors have thrown loosely together everything that happened to occur to them in the course of their desultory journey, from serious poems to menus. The method undoubtedly has its virtues, and the resulting extravaganza makes very easy reading: one is no longer surprised that the Book Society should have selected this book when one discovers that it contains nothing obscure or "profound"; no message, though the point of view is naturally leftish (poor Jane Austen is made to exemplify the economic basis of society), and no really virulent satire. The authors are out to amuse and (very mildly) instruct; they succeed in the main very well. And they are funny, whether they are quoting from other books on Iceland or describing their own experiences; and Mr. Auden's Byronic stanzas are brilliant light verse. The same cannot be said for Mr. MacNeice's heroic couplets, which are exceedingly slovenly: this is not a form which is tolerable except when highly polished. When I was at Oxford, we use to play a game—a form of Consequences—called Communal Verses, in which each player wrote two lines "blind." The result was very like Mr. MacNeice's; but such things are scarcely worth publishing. On the other hand, Mr. Auden contributes three serious poems which are of real beauty, though I doubt if Book Society members will make much of them.

I found the long satire on the schoolgirl style overdone to the point of dullness; but some of the straight description is very good indeed:

> Mysterious violent figures rise out of the background slashing at prisoners without looking at them. Impassive horses survey another world than theirs. One of the thieves has his head thrown right back and on his forehead dances a bear holding a child. Serried figures, the Queen of Heaven with a tower, St. Peter with no back to his head, etc., rise like a Greek Chorus, right and left of the main panel.

Then there is a collection of proverbs *a la* Blake, of which I select the following: "Gifts should be handed, not hurled"; "Men fight by day, devils by night"; "The meanest guest has the keenest eye."

The authors have found a certain difficulty in making Iceland itself seem interesting. In this they suffer from the same trouble which besets all modern explorers: that of finding little-visited spots of the earth to write about, the trouble which drove Mr. Peter Fleming to the most meaningless part of Central Asia. Perhaps this is why they found it necessary to eke out their book with such a very large quantity of private jokes and references to undescribed friends of whom the ordinary reader will have no knowledge whatever. Thus, the Last Will and Testament, with which the book ends, is a veritable orgy of this kind of game, no doubt extremely amusing to the other members of the Upper Fifth, but scarcely to anyone else.

The photographs are sometimes beautiful and invariably disarming.

EDWARD SACKVILLE WEST

SCOTT'S LAST LETTERS

The Letters of Sir Walter Scott. Edited by SIR H. J. C. GRIERSON. Vols. XI and XII. *Constable.* 18*s.* each volume.

Sir Herbert Grierson's task virtually ended with Volume XI, which brings us to the year 1831, when Scott's days were already numbered. For the last remnant of his life his correspondence was so scrappy and meagre that a twelfth volume would not have been called for had not a considerable number of letters come to light too late for inclusion in the proper chronological places in the earlier volume. Chief among these are Scott's love-letters to Charlotte Carpenter, which (in the proper romantic tradition) were discovered in a secret drawer at Abbotsford a year ago, but it must be confessed that had that drawer kept its secret, not much would have been lost. Of all great imaginative writers Scott was surely the dullest at writing a love-letter. It is difficult to imagine that Charlotte, as a bride-elect, ever had the slightest thrill at the sight of his handwriting, though doubtless she read the epistles dutifully. Afterwards she was to have as pleasant and lively letters as ever wife received from husband, but love-letters worthy of the name, never.

On the whole the letters of Scott's last years make sad and not particularly interesting reading. His circle of acquaintances was shrinking—partly by death and partly owing to the growing infirmity of temper which was part and parcel with his bodily infirmities. But to the end he kept a dourly brave face to the world. It is no fault of his that we can read his suffering between the lines. When he set out for his Mediterranean cruise he hardly expected to see Scotland again. At Malta and Naples a morbid, confused optimism set in which made him imagine that his debts had all been paid off and that his literary powers were greater than ever. But that soon passed. There is irony in the fact that the last scrap of writing that came from his hand was a letter, dated from Mainz, to Schopenhauer, very civilly regretting that circumstances had prevented their meeting.

While some criticism might be made of the plan—more valiant than discreet—on which Sir Herbert Grierson and his assistants, Mr. Parker and Mr. Davidson Cook, have carried out their vast work, no praise can be too generous for their diligence and exactitude in verifying and annotating the text. But why on earth have they not given us an index? No work ever needed one more.

DONALD CARSWELL

SHORTER NOTICES

Archaeological Reconnaissances in North-Western India and South-Eastern Iran. By SIR AUREL STEIN. *Macmillan.* £3 3*s.*

This is the raw material of history, rawer than usual in fact, for Sir Aurel Stein is the last man to allow any concession to public ignorance. Here and there the amateur of Asiatic studies will be able to seize on a fact. Alexander's movements in South Persia and the Punjab are somewhat further elucidated. The identifications of Hsuan Tsang's "Simhapura" with Murti, and of Marco Polo's "Camadi" with the "Jiruft" of the Arab geographers and the Behkird of to-day, receive new and convincing certificates. There are one or two interesting illustrations of buildings that show the early coalescence of Indian and Iranian architectures, and one or two romantic ones of forts lost in the desert and the Portuguese castle of Hormuz. And the fragments of Gupta sculpture from Murti are mercifully accompanied by dimensions whose littleness is a tribute—if one were needed—to the author's honesty. But the greater part of the book is concerned with beads, potsherds, arrow-heads and pins which, in the words of the blurb, "derive special interest from the fact that they reveal close relationship on the one side with the relics of the earliest civilisation so far known from the lower Indus valley . . . and on the other side with the chalcolithic culture prevailing in ancient Elam . . . during the 4th millennium B.C." Those whose share in this interest induces them to buy the book will get value for their money both in the modesty of the author's style and in the splendour of his publishers' production.

The Knights Templars: Their Rise and Fall. By G. A. CAMPBELL. *Duckworth.* 15*s.*

Mr. Campbell tells the story of the Knights Templars from the inception of the Order, which was established to form a permanent force in the East to succour and protect pilgrims to the Holy Sepulchre, to their final compulsory disbandment, when Philip the Fair decided that their accumulated property was worth looting and found a ready coadjutor in Clement V. They were an easy prey; for no prince of the time had been unaware of the danger involved in having in his dominions a Militant Order owning property but owing allegiance to none but the Pope. The service, brilliant in a military but futile in a political sense, rendered by the Templars is faithfully recorded by Mr. Campbell. It fell however to the Hospitallers, who inherited the duties and much of the property of the Templars, to perform a really useful service, when they assisted in breaking the Moslem power, which had become a real menace to European civilisation. The most interesting chapters in Mr. Campbell's story are those in which he describes the trials of the Templars in France and England, trials in which the grossness of the charges is only surpassed by the fullness of the confessions.

Economic Thought and Language. By L. M. FRASER. *Black.* 12*s.* 6*d.*

Few things about economics are more puzzling to the outsider than its terminology. Other sciences have their own. A chemist knows exactly what is meant by sulphuric acid; and any layman can find out. It has its own precise meaning and no other. But an economist borrows from everyday language such a word as "utility" and uses it perforce in half a dozen different senses. He may, or may not, himself distinguish clearly between them; fellow economists are by several degrees less likely to do so in reading his works; and the lay reader will in all probability go completely astray. Hence a good part of the disrepute of economics among "practical" men and social reformers ("Marginal

The Fabian Society

FRIENDS' HALL LECTURES

Autumn, 1937

THE Autumn course of lectures will be held this year in the Friends' Hall, Euston Road, N.W.1, on six successive Thursday evenings, beginning on Thursday, October 21st, at 8.30. The general title of the course will be "WHITHER BRITAIN?"

The dates, subjects and lecturers arranged are as follows:—

1. Thursday, October 21st. **"SCIENCE AND SOCIAL INSTITUTIONS."**
   Chairman: THE RT. HON. GEORGE LANSBURY, M.P.
   Lecturer: BERTRAND RUSSELL.
2. Thursday, October 28th. **"THE WAR HORIZON."**
   Chairman: ALDN. A. EMIL DAVIES, L.C.C.
   Lecturer: VERNON BARTLETT.
3. Thursday, November 4th. **"THE ECONOMIC CONSEQUENCES OF WAR PREPARATION."**
   Chairman: PROFESSOR A. M. CARR-SAUNDERS.
   Lecturer: G. D. H. COLE.
4. Thursday, November 11th. **"THE POLITICAL REACTIONS OF REARMAMENT."**
   Chairman: KINGSLEY MARTIN.
   Lecturer: SIR STAFFORD CRIPPS, K.C., M.P.
5. Thursday, November 18th. **"SOCIALISM TO-DAY."**
   Chairman: ALDN. MRS. M. A. HAMILTON, L.C.C.
   Lecturer: RT. HON. HERBERT MORRISON, M.P.
6. Thursday, November 25th. **"THE OUTLOOK FOR CIVIL LIBERTIES."**
   Chairman: THE RT. HON. VISCOUNT SANKEY.
   Lecturer: PROFESSOR H. J. LASKI.

Admission will be by ticket for the course, which can be applied for at once, or for each lecture separately. As the accommodation is limited, preference will be given to applicants for tickets for the whole course. Applications for single tickets will therefore be reserved until October 14th, 1937, after which the remaining seats will be allotted according to priority of application.

The price of tickets for numbered and reserved stalls is one guinea for the course of six, or five shillings for a single lecture; for numbered back stalls and front rows of gallery seats, twelve shillings for the course, or three shillings for a single lecture; for numbered back rows of stalls and gallery, six shillings for the course, or one shilling and sixpence for a single lecture.

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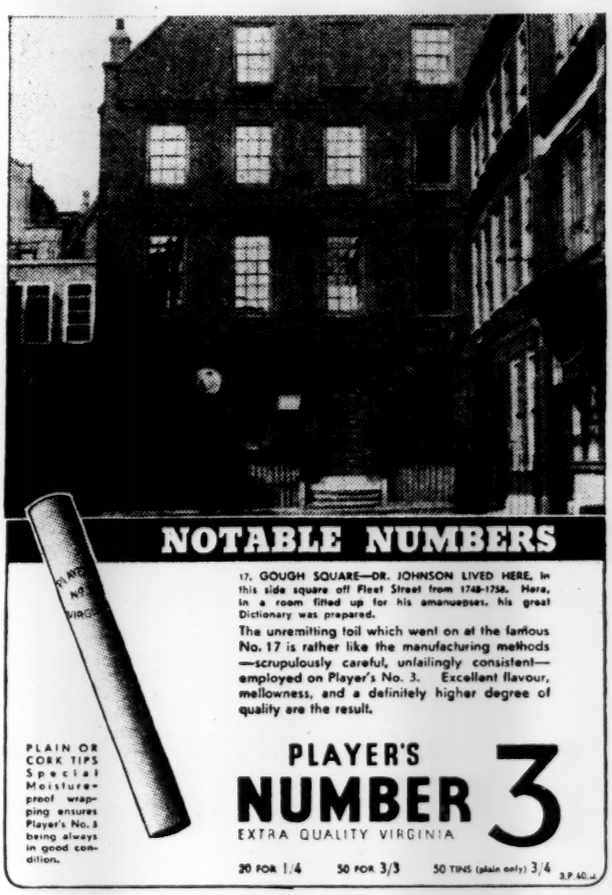

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productivity theory of wages indeed! What is the 'productivity' of a doorkeeper at the Ritz?") and hence, too, an enormous wastage of effort on the part of the economists themselves; much banging at open doors, much debate at cross-purposes, much deceptive novelty in argument. Professor Fraser's book, had it been written fifty years ago, would have saved incalculable quantities of mental gymnastics and gallons of printers' ink. It does not endeavour to evaluate conflicting economic theories as such; but it analyses, correlates, distinguishes and defines the chief terms of economic usage in such a manner as to leave no shade of ambiguity unilluminated. At the same time it inevitably reveals how many controversies past and present have in fact arisen merely from terminological misunderstandings. Lack of space forbids discussion of the few points on which Professor Fraser's acute logical sense appears to have failed him; they are in any case not vital. He has written the best book of its kind since Cannan's *Theories of Production and Distribution*; and no one interested in economic theory should miss it.

After Many Days. By FRANK FLETCHER, M.A. Hale. 12*s.* 6*d.*

Mr. Frank Fletcher (now Sir Frank) was at Rossall and Balliol, and since then has been successively assistant master at Rugby, Master of Marlborough and headmaster of Charterhouse. Of the 65 years of his life "nearly 50 have been spent in English public schools." In 1882, Mr. Fletcher caught his first glimpse of Rossall from a railway compartment full of other little boys. "There's the old pig-sty," exclaimed one of them; though he was only 12 at the time, Mr. Fletcher was not amused. An idealist, he saw at once that this sort of realism, the attitude of what he later calls "a discontented high-brow," is the sort of thing that breaks down corporate life and attacks the very existence of his "Public School." It is a sign of boredom and contempt, rather than of the "awe tempered with amusement" which Mr. Fletcher rightly suggests is a correct and decent way to think about your headmaster. Mr. Fletcher believed in firmness and aristocracy "in its best sense—the rule of the best." In his world schools are "ruled" with greater or less success, but always by brilliant scholars. Scholarship is gauged by prizes won at Oxford rather than any flexibility of thought. It is interesting to note that, of all the products of his rule whom Mr. Fletcher has mentioned, only one person could be described as being creative. And only those who remember their *Good-bye to All That* will recognise "Robert" as Mr. Graves. The discontented high-brow is a tiresome blot in a well-ordered world, and Mr. Fletcher, concentrating on Classics, gentleman ushers, and the crowning achievement of a £70,000 war memorial chapel, designed by Mr. (now Sir Giles) Gilbert Scott, has done his best to ignore it. Mr. Fletcher wanted to give an idea of public school life to those who had not seen it from within. He has succeeded in drawing a picture of himself. Reading this book is like a long afternoon spent with the best sort of headmaster. A friendly man full of notions, memories, relics of antiquity, and jokes which are not so much funny in themselves as the cause of wit in other men.

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About Motoring

"SLICED" TYRES

DURING the last year or two private owners have observed with wonder and perplexity advertisements in British motor journals, inviting them to submit their tyres to a firm which is not otherwise engaged in the tyre industry, in order that a large number of very narrow cross slits may be gashed in the treads. The advertisers claim that this treatment confers a wholly unique grip on the road, whether wet or dry, clean or slimy; and thereby reduces skidding, eliminates wheelspin, and altogether vastly enhances road adhesion and general safety. Private owners have not so far responded in this country with any visible enthusiasm to such invitations. They have been brought up to believe that bold and rough corrugations and excrescences are essential to a good tyre grip. In particular those bold spirits who compete in trials held over by-roads with vile so-called "colonial" surfaces, invariably fit a special competition pattern of tyre, lovingly known as "knobblies." Moreover, parsimony suggests that when one has paid a good round sum for a new tyre, of which a percentage surely goes to cover the cost of so many pounds of rubber, why should one sacrifice a moiety of the precious rubber to a catchpenny advertiser who is not a tyre expert? Caution adds that if the great tyre companies have not identified the value of these razor-like gashes in over forty years of experiment, is it likely that an outsider should suddenly have stumbled on a technical secret of great value?

However, the pendulum has quite suddenly begun to swing, and there are indications that in the near future the entire motoring community may rapidly be converted to "sliced" tyre treads, and that the bold knobs and corrugations of the past half-century may die a swift and unanimous death. It is too early to proclaim this as an accepted dogma; but the United States is already betraying something of a landslide in this respect. America, like us, has its Automobile Association; and the American A.A. recently conducted some brake tests on wet and dry concrete roads, at which almost incredible figures are alleged to have been recorded. For the sake of emphasis I will tabulate these figures in contrast with the corresponding standards accepted in this country.

Speed.	U.S.A. Stopping Distance.	Standard British Stopping Distance.
30 m.p.h.	17ft.	31ft.
40 m.p.h.	32ft.	54ft.
65 m.p.h.	115ft.	142ft.

It should be observed that the American figures were registered on *wet* concrete; and that the British figures are those regarded by the Ministry of Transport, the police, and the leading manufacturers of brake linings as representing 100 per cent. braking efficiency. This latter figure implies three essential factors, the perfect tyre, the perfect road surface, and the perfectly designed braking system. From this table only two conclusions are possible. The one is that the American A.A. was somehow humbugged, or is completely dishonest; the other is that some novel factor has been identified which will compel us to revise our notions of what constitutes brake efficiency. If the latter solution is correct, only one new factor is concerned, namely the "sliced" tyre. The American figures were achieved by using an American tyre not yet marketed in this country, and known as the "General Dual 10." At a casual glance it appears to have a perfectly smooth tread, but on closer examination is found to be gashed with a large number of very thin razor-like circumferential slits. There appear to be, judging from photographs which are not too clear, from 15 to 20 of these thin circumferential gashes. The

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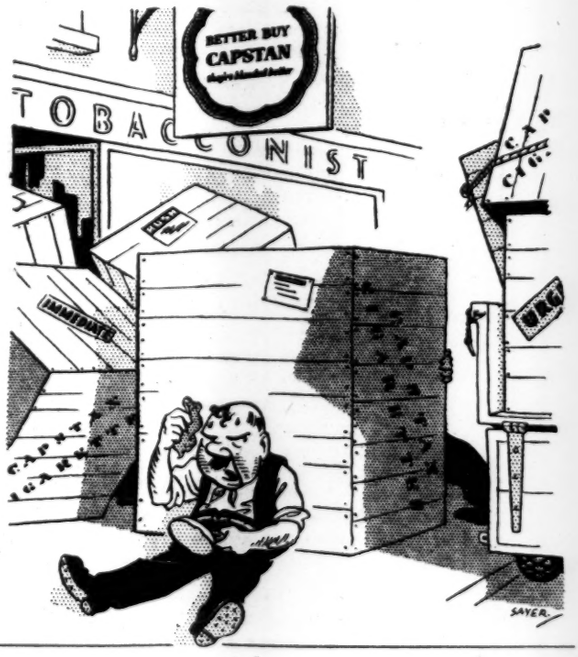

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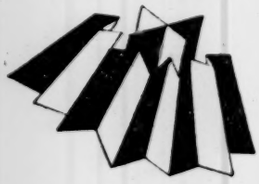
immediate effect of this public and official demonstration of the so-called " sliced " tyre in America has been to create a buzz of activity in the design and research laboratories of many tyre companies. At the moment, to the best of my knowledge, no British engineers are marketing tyres with these circumferential slicings, but the firm cited at the commencement of these notes makes approximately similar claims for its transverse slicings, as executed on demand in the tread of any standard tyre marketed in these islands. It is further suggested by reliable authorities that the " slicing " process in no way reduces the working life of a tyre, as the " slicings " permit a flexible and local surrender to road friction at the point of contact, and so avert the normal grinding away of a solid rubber tread in the form of dust, or even under excessive heat in the possible form of rubber slime.

Within a few months, no doubt, we shall hear on trustworthy authority the real facts about " slicing," and its technical explanation. For the moment it is enough to say that one risks nothing by having a set of tyres " sliced " by such processes as are already available in this country, and that there is a very encouraging suggestion of its efficiency. In good time the respective merits of cross-slicing and circumferential slicing will be analysed and published. Meanwhile, there is evidence that the cross-slicing—available in these islands at low cost and anywhere in the country—does reduce the tendency to skid, minimises wheelspin in hilly country, and increases braking efficiency. I have inspected a curious photograph taken of the American sliced tyre in a crash stop over a wet road. A pit had been dug under the road, and roofed with a panel of heavy glass, over which the tyre crossed. In its passage it had squeezed a narrow strip of the glass bone dry. I am not, of course, prepared to say that a knobbly tyre, heavily braked, would not have wiped such a glass panel clean and dry in like manner ; but the photograph certainly suggests to the lay mind that the slicings act like a screen-wiper ; the " give " of the first narrow flaps of rubber to encounter the surface scours the surface clean, and then the next contact segment clings to it firmly. The " sliced " tyres have already been employed under rather different conditions with effects which are claimed to be equally conclusive. Every year the American racing men compete in a timed climb of Pike's Peak, a fourteen mile zig-zag climb to which the Stelvio Pass presents the nearest European parallel. The 1937 winner used sliced tyres, whereas his competitors relied on more conventionally shod wheels.

I do not suggest that any reader should instantly proceed to have his tyres " sliced " as the result of reading these notes ; they are penned merely to interest the average motorist in a new development which may accomplish much in respect of road safety.

R. E. DAVIDSON



Many Sides

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No. 386

Set by Raymond Mortimer.

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A robin redbreast in a cage
Puts all Heaven in a rage . . . etc.

RULES—

1. Envelopes should be marked with the number of the Problem, in the top left-hand corner, and should be addressed to COMPETITIONS, 10 Great Turnstile, High Holborn, W.C.1. Solutions must reach the Editor by first post on Friday, August 13th.

2. Competitors may use a pseudonym. Typescript is not insisted on, but writing must be on one side of the paper only.

3. The Editor's decision is final. He reserves the right to print in part or as a whole any matter sent in, whether it be awarded a prize or not. MSS. cannot be returned. When no entries reach the required standard no prize will be awarded.

4. No competitor is eligible for more than one prize in any one week.

The result of the last week's competition will be announced in our next issue.

RESULT OF COMPETITION No. 384

Set by V. S. Pritchett

The noble sentiments of " Rule Britannia " are so belied by the present discretion of British foreign policy that a new version drawing upon the new delicacy and refinement in English political utterance (" We deeply deplore . . . " etc.) is indicated. The usual prizes (Two Guineas and Half a Guinea) are offered for such an urgent revision of the first two verses of that hymn.

Report by V. S. Pritchett

There was, of course, a certain monotony in the indignation of competitors. It was refreshed by the feeling of a minority who think that the Left have become fire-eaters. There were some one or two who held the comforting view that our shabbiness is cleverer than it seems. Thus Mr. J. Taylor :

The nations not so wise as she
May well be bombed and gassed away,
While she shall flourish mostly free
(What's in an odd " yea " and a " nay " ?)
Fool, Britannia ! Britannia fool the knaves.
Yes-men never never never shall be slaves.

Allan M. Laing saw guardian angels with defective scansion halting our tactless imperialism with the cautionary :

Cool, Britannia, Britannia, cool thy braves.
Britons, risk not watery graves.

And Britannia was further adjured to bow, hedge, share, kneel, wait. Wm. Bliss was terse and bitter. E. Shepherd referred to " Britannia schizophrene." But the results were poor on the whole and from some of the scansion I should gather that the patriotic anthem is not very well known. It surprised me that no one insisted that Britannia should rule the air and those competitors who tried their hands with " the grave view," " deeply deplore " and other clichés were not very adroit with them. Really there ought to be no prizes, but many competitors are about to view the sea Britannia is said to rule, and far be it from me to discourage them. Therefore the prizes go to an old hand, Wm. Bliss, and to Pithecus.

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HAPPY holiday for boys and girls on sea front with Mrs. Corkhill (trained nurse), Sun Lodge School, Aldeburgh. After August 26th. Also vacancies for next school term.

PERFECTLY quiet room, nice scenery, board, wanted by lady, August. Or furnished bungalow for two. MOHOLY, 39 Mecklenburgh Sq., W.C.1.

VISIT FINLAND. 11 DAYS FOR ONLY £10, including sea voyage from England and two days at First Class Hotel. Lakes and Islands, Forests, Fells and Moor. Write for free handbook: FINNISH TRAVEL BUREAU, 7 Victoria Street, London, S.W.1.

SIMPLE Swiss life. Small Chalet; vicinity Lake Thun. Terms moderate, September, lovely month. FRAU VON STEIGER, Eichhalde Kiesen, Bern.

SEE 20th Anniversary Celebrations in Moscow this year. FSU conducted party leaving London October 30th. Three weeks, £23. Bookings for tours taken all the year round. Write for details. FSU Tours Dept., Friendship House, Northington Street, London, W.C.1.

BRITTANY, South Coast; home comforts. Guests received in modernised private house; 50 acres grounds; on sea. Bathing, fishing, boating, sailing. Tennis clubs and picturesque fishing harbour near. Excellent tourist centre. Car. From 55 *frs.* per day. MME. CHAUVET, Stang Bihan, en Beuzec Conq. Finistere.

IN A RIVIERA VALLEY, a country house with sunny, sheltered terrace and gardens leading to the sea, you will find absolute quiet, modern comforts. Pension: Winter, from 40 *fcs.*; Summer, from 50 *fcs.* LES PALMERAIES DE VALMER, LA CROIX, VAR, FRANCE.

MIEDERS, STUBAI VALLEY, TYROL, AUSTRIA. 3,200ft. up. 10 m. Innsbruck. Beautiful Alpine scenery. Fishing. Excellent cuisine. Terms 7s. to 8s. HERR BECK, Hotel Lerchenhof.

RIVIERA, HOTEL DE LA MER, Cap Martin. Facing full south in own grounds direct on Sea. Buses to Menton and Monte Carlo. Pension 8s.

BOARD RESIDENCE

A BABY BREAKFAST? Not at 34 Southwick Street, W.2, where one gets Britain's best bacon.

NEAR Swiss Cottage. Exceptionally well-kept comfortable bedsittingrms., good food, C.H.W. Terms 35s., 42s. 'Phone: PRI 4521 or call 8 Hillgrove Rd., N.W.6.

CHELSEA. Divan rooms (h. and c. basins). Single from 27s. 7d.; includes room, breakfast and baths, 6s. 6d. per night. Dinner optional. Flaxman House, 105 Oakley Street. Flax. 7284.

25s. CHELSEA, Bed and Breakfast, Left Household. Phone FLAxman 9970 or SLOane 3842.

5 HARLEY RD., Hampstead, N.W.3. Bed-sitting room with large balcony. Inset basin, constant hot water, garden; 3 mins. tube and buses. Very quiet road; 2 *gns.* week, bed and breakfast. Primrose 2973.

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EVERY convenience and consideration. 1d. bus from Baker St. Large, quiet garden. Garage. Terms from £2 5s. weekly. Enquiries and inspection invited. 'Phone: Primrose 5058. 42 Finchley Rd., London, N.W.8.

UNFURN. very large rooms; also studios (about 16×30ft.), quiet, redecorated house, beautiful gdn. 1 *gn.*–30s. Smaller 15s.–£1. Service and meals if req. Nr. Swiss Cottage. 16 Belsize Sq., N.W.3. Telephone.

APPOINTMENTS VACANT & WANTED

LANCASHIRE COUNTY LIBRARY

Applications are invited for the following three posts:
Branch Librarian, Droylsden.
Branch Librarian, Litherland.
Branch Librarian, Kearsley.

Candidates must either possess the Certificate for the Diploma of the School of Librarianship, or must have passed the Intermediate Examination of the Library Association. The starting salary will be £150, but a new scale of £170–£12–£230 will operate from April, 1938. The successful candidate will be required to pass a medical examination and to contribute to the County Council's superannuation scheme. Applications, accompanied by not more than three testimonials, must reach the Director of Education, County Library, County Offices, Preston, not later than Saturday, August 14th.

UNIVERSITY COLLEGE OF NORTH WALES, BANGOR.
(A Constituent College of the University of Wales).

Applications are invited for the post of PROBATIONARY ASSISTANT LECTURER IN FRENCH. Qualifications in Mediaeval French required. Salary £250 with superannuation. Duties to commence October 1st, 1937, or as soon as possible thereafter.

Applications and testimonials should be received not later than SATURDAY, AUGUST 21st, by the undersigned, from whom further particulars may be obtained.

July 26th, 1937. E. H. JONES, Secretary and Registrar.

THE BOOK CENSORSHIP BOARD
APPLICATIONS are invited from intelligent gentlefolk for affiliation as book-reviewers. Age, sex and whereabouts of residence immaterial. Form of Application obtainable from the Secretary, B.C.B., East Lodge, Albert Gate, London, W.1. Applications must be made by post.

ADVERTISEMENT Representative required by monthly magazine, preferably knowing publishers as well as general advertisers. Apply Box. 930, N.S. & N., 10 Gt. Turnstile, London, W.C.1.

COUNTRYWOMAN wanted to look after two boys (4 and 2) in converted Sussex farmhouse. Patience and interest in animals essential. Preferably drive car. Fox, Greenhouse, Rotherfield.

MAN (35), capable, intelligent, desires situation, companion, secretarial; home and small remuneration. Country preferred. Box 927, N.S. & N., 10 Gt. Turnstile, London, W.C.1.

"GREAT MEN THESE 'GREATS' MEN." One of them, with 5 years experience of Secondary and Adult Education, needs a job. Write Box 924, N.S. & N., 10 Gt. Turnstile, London, W.C.1.

STUDENT desires temporary job, second week August to third week September. Proletarian work preferred. Varied non-academic experience: travelled. Box 921, N.S. & N., 10 Gt. Turnstile, London, W.C.1.

PROGRESSIVE young lady, experienced traveller, seeks interesting occupation, preferably abroad. Write: Box 928, N.S. & N., 10 Gt. Turnstile, London, W.C.1.

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REPORTING, SHORTHAND, DUPLICATING. Technical MSS and Plays a Speciality. Verbatim or condensed reporting. Temporary Shorthand-Typists provided.—METROPOLITAN TYPING AND REPORTING OFFICE, 75 Chancery Lane, W.C.2.
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EXPERIENCED Literary Typist, Cambridge University man. Moderate. LAMBE, 12 Colville Gardens, W.11. Park 9056.

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Authors' MSS, Plays, Schedules, etc.
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PROMPT SECRETARIAL SERVICES, LIMITED, 7 Princes St., Hanover Sq., W.1 (Mayfair 3163–4).

RIDING

FIRST-CLASS horses for the Row, under personal supervision of Lord Lisle. Courses of lessons, reasonable prices. Flaxman 0984.

FIRST PRIZE

Since Britain late at Hitler's nod
Became a third, or fourth-class State
And learned to kiss the Fascist rod,
This be her Anthem, up to date;
Kneel Britannia! Britannia bend the knee!
Britons never shall be free.

The nations not so tame as thee
May in their turn make tyrants fall
While thou shalt an example be
The laughing-stock of one and all.
Kneel Britannia, etc.

WILLIAM BLISS

SECOND PRIZE

When Britain hears the loud command
Of Dukes and Leaders o'er the main,
Her statesmen fly to Switzerland
And Premiers croon this cooling strain:
Bow, Britannia! bow thy head,
Britons never must see red.

The nations not so tame as thee
To only single tyrants fall,
But thou to each must bend the knee;
The jest and plaything of them all.
Bow, Britannia! bow thy head,
Britons never must see red.

PITHECUS

CALIBAN'S PROBLEM CONTEST

PROBLEM 240.—PINPRICKS

"We played at a question and answer game, called Pinpricks. It was a sort of tournament affair.

"Each of us had one bout against each of the others. A bout ended when the combined scores of the two players concerned reached a stipulated number of points. The same total for each bout. The sequel was very odd. In no two bouts was the final score the same, yet every possible score was achieved.

"Topsy won the tournament, with a marvellous aggregate score. She totalled the maximum number of points compatible with what I have just told you, that no two bouts produced the same final score.

"Timothy was second. His score, we found, was the maximum compatible with what you know already. And so—taking them in the order of their aggregate scores—with each of the other players. Each, in order, scored as many points as was consistent with Topsy scoring what she did, and with Timothy scoring what *he* did, and with the third player—Toots—scoring what *she* did, and so on down the line.

"I was bottom!

"TODGER."

"P.S.—I forgot to mention that, in spite of my being bottom, I averaged, for each of my bouts, four times as many points as there were players taking part. So I didn't do so badly, did I?"

What was the score of Todger's bout with Toots?

PROBLEM 238.—PLYMOUTH HOE

Solution by W. A. Caro

Clearly at least 7 ends must be won by single woods, the remaining 4 ends may be won in the following ways:—

2	2	2	2..	..	..	(a)
3	2	2	1..	..	..	(b)
4	2	1	1..	..	..	(c)

(b) alone leads to a solution, viz.:—

Frobisher wins 3 ends by a margin of 3, 2 and 1 wood; Drake wins 8 ends—one by a margin of 2 woods and the others by single woods.

Frobisher was successful at 3 ends.

PROBLEM 237.—ANDERSON'S BRAIN-WAVE

A set of Low's cartoons goes to: G. R. Mason, Gwynant, Crofton Lane, Orpington, Kent.

Eight points are awarded.

PRIZES FOR PROBLEM SOLVERS

A set of Low's cartoons is awarded to the sender of a correct solution selected at random.

In addition, a record is kept of correct solutions sent, and of the points scored weekly by solvers. On attaining 100 points a solver is entitled to a prize consisting of any book (or books) reviewed or advertised in these columns, of a value not greater than 10s. Solvers who have won a prize on this basis are eligible for a second prize on attaining a further 120 points, and for a third prize on attaining a further 150. Solutions must be addressed to CALIBAN, c/o the Editor, and must reach this office not later than Tuesday week following publication of the problem. Solutions to two problems may be sent in one envelope, but on separate sheets of paper.

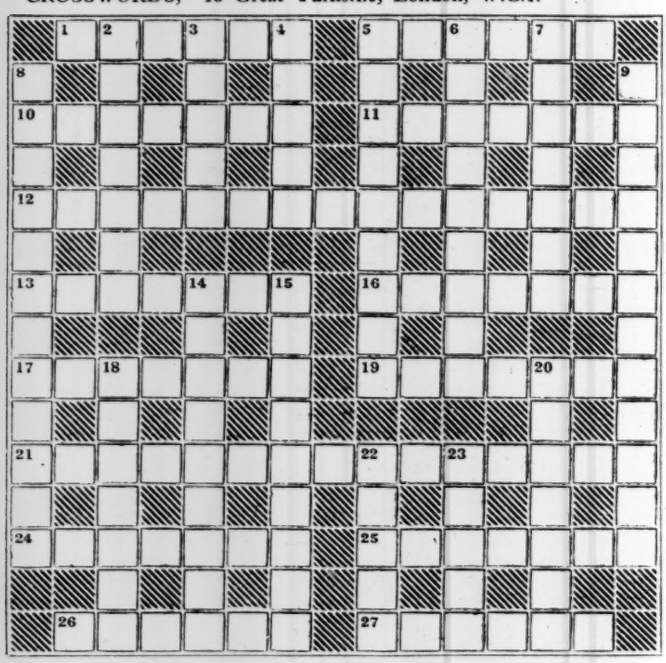
Some indication should be given of the method of solution.

[U.S.A. Competitors. The Editor regrets that the prizes offered in our Week-end Competitions cannot apply to American competitors.]

CALIBAN

WEEK-END CROSSWORD 387

Books to the value of Five Shillings may be chosen by the sender of the first correct solution opened. Post solutions to arrive not later than first delivery Wednesday following the date of issue, addressed to "CROSSWORDS," 10 Great Turnstile, London, W.C.1.



Set by L.-S.

The last week's winner is

Miss Waters, Medfa, Kingston Hill, Surrey.

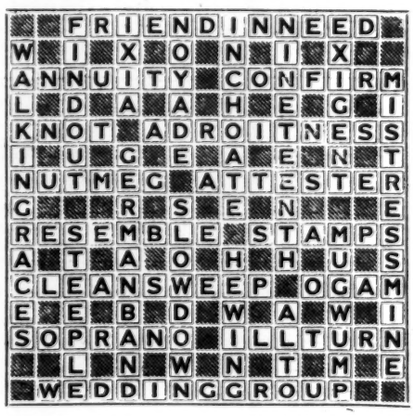
ACROSS

1. The Church requires them no doubt on certain fasts, but not, as you might expect, on Ash Wednesday. (6)
5. This finishes off one's teeth. (6)
10. The sort of mouth that will soon be blooming well open. (7)
11. Sounds like the fork for Towcester. (7)
12. Such coloured horses are presumably always well bedded down. (15)
13. No one with a better half could so describe his figure. (7)
16. Bitterness found in baths. (7)
17. In earthly shape. (7)
19. Always coupled in 22. (7)
21. One has obviouslybeen arrested with a Commission. (15)
24. Mother I dare the actress. (7)
25. Jewish writers. (7)
26. Rabbits are often put out by his behaviour. (6)
27. He has time to return in the south east. (6)

DOWN

2. Animal that must have got up the ark inside. (7)
3. At arms bend. (5)
4. The edges are finally turned on top. (5)
5. Sociable way to get people fed up with you. (9)
6. Shows that the poet is not at first emphatic. (9)
7. Rail off, as it were. (7)
8. Space for a change (12)
9. They often save the fast driver who accidentally goes head first. (12)
14. A hearty hurrah for a meal. (9)
15. Bird-like part of the squaw's anatomy? (9)
18. Where the horseman is expected to come down? (7)
20. Food for the collector. (7)
22. Personal air holes. (5)
23. He cut up the ram in the women's quarters. (5)

LAST WEEK'S CROSSWORD



London Amusements

MATINEES

All at 2.30 p.m. unless otherwise stated.

ALDWYCH. **Housemaster.** Wed., Thurs.

COLISEUM. **St. Moritz.** Daily, 2,30.

COMEDY. **Busman's Honeymoon.** Tu., Fri.

DUKE of YORK'S. **Black Limelight.** W., Sat.

GARRICK. **Sarah Simple.** Mon., Thurs.

GLOBE. **They Came By Night.** Wed., Thur.

HIS MAJESTY'S. **Balalaika.** Wed. & Sat.

LYRIC. **Victoria Regina.** Wed. & Thurs.

PHOENIX. **Judgment Day.** Thurs., Sat

PLAYHOUSE. **Whiteoaks.** Wed., Thurs., Sat.

STRAND. **A Spot of Bother.** Tues., Thurs.

WHITEHALL. **Anthony & Anna.** Thurs., Sat.

WYNDHAM'S. **George & Margaret.** W., Th.

THEATRES

ALDWYCH. Over 300 Perfs. Tem. 6404.
8.30. Mats., WED. and THURS., at 2.30.
HOUSEMASTER
A Farcical Comedy by IAN HAY.

COLISEUM, Charing X. Tem. 3161. (7 lines).
2.30 and 8.15 DAILY
ST. MORITZ
A NOVEL REAL ICE MUSICAL SPECTACLE.

COMEDY. Over 260 Perfs. Whi. 2578.
Evgs., 8.30. Mats., Tues., Fri., 2.30.
"BUSMAN'S HONEYMOON"
By DOROTHY L. SAYERS & M. ST. CLARE BYRNE.

DUKE OF YORK'S. Temple Bar 5211.
Evgs., 8.30. Mats., Wed. and Sat., 2.30.
MARGARET RAWLINGS in
BLACK LIMELIGHT

GARRICK. (Tem. 4601.) 8.40. Mon., Thurs., 2.30.
"A. A. MILNE'S SPARKLING COMEDY."
SARAH SIMPLE
LEONORA CORBETT, A. R. WHATMORE, AGNES LAUCHLAN.

GLOBE. Ger. 1592. 8.30. Weds., Thurs., 2.30.
OWEN NARES in
"THEY CAME BY NIGHT"
URSULA JEANS. DAVID BURNS. CEES LASEUR.

HIS MAJESTY'S. (Whi. 6606.) EVGS., 8.15.
BALALAIKA A Musical Play.
Mats., WEDNESDAYS & SATURDAYS, 2.30.

LYRIC. (Gerrard 3686.)
Evgs., 8.30 sharp. Mats., Wed., Thurs. 2.30.
VICTORIA REGINA
by LAURENCE HOUSMAN.

PHOENIX, Charing Cross Road. (TEM. 8611.)
Evenings prompt, 8.30. Mats., Thurs. & Sat., 2.30.
ELMER RICE'S **JUDGMENT DAY**
Prices, 1s. 6d., 3s. 6d., 4s. 9d., 6s., 8s. 6d., 10s. 6d., 12s. 6d.

PLAYHOUSE. Over 540 Perfs. Whi. 7774.
Evgs., 8.30 (ex. Mon.). Wed., Thurs., Sat., at 2.30.
NANCY PRICE in
WHITEOAKS

SAVOY. Evgs., 8.30. Mats., Mon., Fri., 2.30. Tem. 8888.
THE AMAZING DR. CLITTERHOUSE

STRAND. Tem. 2660. Evgs., 8.30. Mats., Tu., Th., 2.30.
ROBERTSON HARE. ALFRED DRAYTON in
"A SPOT OF BOTHER"
A New Farce by VERNON SYLVAINE.

WHITEHALL. (Whi. 6692.) 2nd YEAR
Evgs., 8.30. Mats., Thurs. & Sat., 2.30. (Smoking.)
ANTHONY AND ANNA.
A Comedy by ST. JOHN ERVINE.

WYNDHAM'S. Tem. 3028, 3029.
EVGS., 8.30. MATS., WED. & THURS., at 2.30.
"GEORGE and MARGARET."
COMEDY by GERALD SAVORY.

REPERTORY THEATRE

HULL. **Little.**
Evgs., 8. Mat., Sat., 5 p.m.
Bats In the Belfry.
By Diana Morgan and Robert McDermot.

PICTURE THEATRES

ACADEMY CINEMA, Oxford St. Ger. 2981.
The Famous International Comedienne
MOLLY PICON
in a gay Jewish Comedy
"YIDDLE WITH HIS FIDDLE" (U.)

EVERYMAN (Opp. Hampstead Tube Stn.) Ham. 2285.
MONDAY, 9th August, for SEVEN DAYS.
H. G. WELLS' FANTASY OF THE FUTURE
THINGS TO COME (A.)

CONCERTS

QUEEN'S HALL
B.B.C. PROMENADE CONCERTS
NIGHTLY at 8.
FORTY-THIRD Season Conducted by
SIR HENRY J. WOOD
B.B.C. SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA
FULL PROGRAMMES NOW READY.
2s. to 7s. 6d. Season (Promenade) 37s. 6d., 21s., at
B.B.C. BROADCASTING HOUSE (Wel. 4468).
CHAPPELL'S, QUEEN'S HALL (Lan. 2823).

ENTERTAINMENTS

MALVERN FESTIVAL
JULY 26th—AUGUST 21st.
Seven plays, including Bernard Shaw's "Millionairess" "Return to Sanity," with Cedric Hardwicke.
Details of Plays, Lectures, Talks, Concerts, etc, from the Theatre, Malvern 777, or MALVERN FESTIVAL OFFICE, 25 Haymarket, S.W.1. (Whitehall 3332).

RESTAURANTS

AH well, if you've not been to RULES you have missed a lot in life . . . Maiden Lane (Covent Garden). Lunch, Dinner, or late Supper (licensed till midnight). Est. 1780.

GIVE your Sherry Party at The Book WINE RESTAURANT, facing British Museum, where you can also read "THE NEW STATESMAN" and take out a subscription. Mus. 6428.

LOANS

ADVANCES £30 to £30,000. Private and immediate, REGIONAL TRUST, LTD., 8 Clifford Street, Bond Street, London, W.1. Tel.: REGENT 5983.

APPLICATIONS are INVITED by the MORTGAGE (LOAN and SECURITIES) COMPANY, 63 Lincoln's Inn Fields, to arrange prompt advances on Reversions or Life Interest. Not exceeding 4½ per cent. net interest.

CASH Loans from £20 promptly advanced without security. Write, 'phone or call ALBEMARLE INVESTMENTS, LTD., 45 Albemarle Street, Piccadilly, London, W.1. Regent 6978.

NOTICE TO Classified Advertisers

OWING to the steady increase of Classified Advertisements the Advertisement Manager regrets that it is no longer practical to accept telephone dictations on Wednesdays. Exception will be made only in cases of genuine urgency. Advertisers can materially help the Department by sending their instructions as early in the week as possible, and never later than first post Wednesday morning.

The Advertisement Manager,
NEW STATESMAN AND NATION
10 Great Turnstile, W.C.1.

FOR SALE, TO LET AND WANTED

LARGE sunny rooms, quiet street Chelsea. Furnished or unfurnished, newly decorated throughout; c.h.w., telephone. Meals and service if required. From £1 1s. Box 888, N.S. & N., 10 Gt. Turnstile, London, W.C.1.

UNFURNISHED, Swiss Cottage, close Embassy Theatre; delightful large redec. rooms or studios. Beautiful garden, every comfort, service and meals available, 17s. 6d. to 25s. With kitchenette, 22s. 6d. to 27s. 6d. North and South aspect. 117 Fellowes Road, N.W.3. Prim. 3080.

BEAUTIFUL large light room, unfurn. or furn., from 21s. 9d. 22 Belsize Av. PRI 1043.

LARGE unfurn. rm. to let. John St., W.C.1. Box 925, N.S. & N., 10 Gt. Turnstile, London, W.C.1.

STUDIO bed-sitting-room, gas ring, 17s. 6d. Suit artist or writer. Kitchen, garden, general use of private home available. Prim. 6534.

4 MINUTES Holland Park Tube. Owner intending to travel desires to let house, mid-September to end of November, 4 bedrooms (excluding staff), 2 large receptions, 2 bathrooms. Garden, deck tennis, wireless, books. Service by man and wife. References exchanged. Moderate terms by arrangement. Dogs undesired. S. M. FRY, 48 Clarendon Road, W.11.

BELSIZE SQUARE. 1 or 2 furnished rooms to let, without service. 'Phone: Primrose 5824. 7 to 9 p.m., not Saturdays.

GENTLEMAN requires bed-sitting room in country cottage. Some attendance; reasonable access London. Box 920, N.S. & N., 10 Gt. Turnstile, London, W.C.1.

REQUIRED October for six months, unfurnished flat, 3 or 4 rooms, etc. 15 minutes from Charing X. Box 910, N.S. & N., 10 Gt. Turnstile, London, W.C.1.

MISCELLANEOUS

IN response to wide demands Children's Minimum Council has published its memorandum on cheap milk for mothers and children. 6d., from 72 Horseferry Rd., S.W.1.

FINEST PERSHORE EGG PLUMS, 12 lbs. 3s. 6d., 24 lbs. 6s. 6d., 48 lbs. 12s. 6d. Carr. paid. Empties free. Send for list. J. E. STANTON, Swan Terrace, Evesham.

GREENGAGES for preserving, etc. 24 lbs. 14s., 12 lbs. 7s. 6d., 40 lbs. 21s. 6d. Pershore Egg Plums, 24 lbs. 6s., 12 lbs. 3s. 6d., 40 lbs. 9s. 6d. Carriage paid in England and Wales. FRANK ROSCOE, Steeple Morden, Royston, Herts.

SOUTH AFRICAN fresh-cut wonder flowers known as Chincherinchees. Delivered free any address United Kingdom during October–November next. Price 7s. 6d. for 100 stems. Will bloom for approximately two months after arrival. Write for details to GLASER & SHAGAM, Box 292, Capetown.

ART of RECORD BUYING. Twelve recordings of one sonata but only one best. You'll find it in this free guide to 1,000 classical records. Write to E.M.G. Hand-made Gramophones Ltd., 11 Grape Street, London, W.C.2, enclosing 2d. in stamps.

THE CASANI SCHOOL OF BALLROOM DANCING. 90 Regent Street (Piccadilly Circus). Private Lessons daily, 10 a.m. to 10 p.m., in all the latest ballroom dances. Guaranteed to teach you steps of any dance in THREE PRIVATE LESSONS. £1 1s. 0d. Practice Classes every Tuesday, 8.30 to 10.30 p.m. 3s. 'PHONE REGENT 4438-9.

NEW SUITS FOR OLD.—Send your favourite suit or sports jacket and we will copy it exactly in any of our John Peel Tweeds. Send for patterns, post free. Prices, complete Suit, 97s. 6d.; Jacket, 57s. 6d. S. REDMAYNE & SONS, LTD., No. 10 Wigton, Cumberland.

HAVE YOU COCKROACHES? Then buy "BLATTIS" UNION COCKROACH PASTE universally and successfully used in all parts of the Globe, extermination guaranteed; from Chemists, Boots' Branches, Stores, or Sole Makers: Howarth's, 473 Crookesmoor, Sheffield. Tins, 1s. 6d., 2s. 6d., 4s. 6d. post free.

INFERIORITY COMPLEX? Write for remarkable free book—British Institute of Practical Psychology, 1 (H.X.7), Ludgate Hill, E.C.4.

PERSONAL

YOUNG man wants another share remote primitive small cottage, Cambs. Writer, possible collaborator, preferred. Box 929, N.S. & N., 10 Gt. Turnstile, London, W.C.1.

WOMAN writer, painter, etc., wanted to share professional woman's Westminster flat and 6-roomed cottage. Mod. cost. IBBERSON, Petham, Ightham, Kent.

NUDIST CLUB, central London, both sexes. Artificial sun. Also woodland Sun-Park. Box 731, N.S. & N., 10 Gt. Turnstile, London, W.C.1.

WHEN you want a portrait in the contemporary photographic tradition, ring ANTHONY PANTING, Welbeck 4950, at 5 Paddington Street, W.1.

NUDISTS! We can put you in touch with nudists all over the British Isles. Write enclosing stamped envelope, SECRETARY, National Sun and Air Association, 6 Foster Lane, E.C.2.

STOP SMOKING—quick, cheap, lasting as grateful 1,000's testify. Either sex. Write, CARLTON CHEMICALS, 251, Birmingham.

THE WEEK IN THE CITY

By DIVES

MORE HOME RAILS—PETROL CUT—FILMS ACT AND A.B.P.

IT has been left to the directors of "Brum" to tone down the otherwise roseate picture presented by the railways' half-year statements. The G.W.R. figures are good: passenger receipts are up by £224,000, goods and miscellaneous by £470,000. Revenue from ancillary businesses has increased by no less than £193,000—a reflection of improved activity in the docks owned by the company. Total receipts are £887,000, and net income £500,449 higher—a net retention of 56 per cent. The Ordinary stock receives an interim of one-half (against one-quarter) of one per cent., and was quoted on Wednesday at £65½. The experience of L.M.S. has been much less favourable, and—to the market's disappointment—the Ordinary stock gets no interim distribution. Receipts are up by £1,410,000, but expenditure has risen by £1,100,000, of which £320,000 is ascribable to the growth of traffic, and no less than £780,000 to the higher cost of fuel, stores, materials and labour. Thus the net advance in income, £310,000, represents a retention of only 23 per cent. of the gross. These figures hardly square with the talk, to which I referred last week, of 3 per cent. for L.M.S. Ordinary. A final dividend of 2 per cent. is not inconceivable, but I should not care to forecast more than 1½ per cent. with any confidence. On the announcement the stock fell from £35 to £33¼, but has since receded to £32¾.

* * *

The question prompted by the railway results as a whole is whether the relatively small net retention of increased gross income achieved by the L.M.S. is exceptional, or whether the ability of the three other lines to retain something like 60 per cent. of their gross income is only temporary. Having regard to the normal time-lag afforded by current contracts in a period of rising prices, I am inclined to conclude that the L.M.S. must have been least fortunately placed in this respect, and that, as contracts for fuel and materials run out, a net retention of something in the neighbourhood of 25 per cent. of gross gains will be typical. If this be so, junior railway stocks, at present prices, seem reasonably valued but do not offer, in my view, great scope for appreciation. The exceptions—suburban passenger and short-distance workmen's fares and goods rates under 10*d.*—in the authorised 5 per cent. increase in charges seem likely to reduce appreciably the estimated net gain to the companies. On the basis of existing wage rates, unless traffic shows an unexpectedly large expansion, it would be unduly optimistic to look for net revenues of the four lines more than £5,000,000 better than the 1936 net income of £35.7 millions. The National Wage Tribunal can hardly fail to award the railwaymen less than restoration of pre-1931 conditions, which will cost nearly £2,500,000 a year, and it may well concede some of their other claims, whose total cost would be at least £9,000,000 a year. The increased charges should enable the companies to foot the bill for growing costs of labour and materials without worsening stockholders' present position; but I cannot see any justification for expecting, in the case of the junior stocks, a marked increase of distributions. Even in the case of G.W.R. Ordinary, it should be remembered that reserves have been drawn on heavily for dividend-equalisation purposes. These will have to be replenished before there can be any idea of a 4 per cent. dividend.

* * *

The reduction of ½*d.* per gallon in the price of petrol last week only momentarily depressed the price of oil shares—and rightly so. I have remarked on a previous occasion that the petrol distributing companies were netting too large a margin of profit, and no doubt the recent reaction in tanker freight rates from 35*s.* to 25*s.* per ton (Gulf to U.K. ports) persuaded even the hard-boiled gentlemen who comprise the petrol ring that 1*s.* 7½*d.* per gallon could not decently and safely be maintained. Perhaps a recurrence of outside competition was feared. At any rate, the reduction to 1*s.* 7*d.* per gallon leaves the petrol companies 1*d.* up on balance this year, which more than compensates them for the rise in freights. Oil company earnings were phenomenally good in 1936, and will be even better this year, so that every investor should keep Shell Transport, Burmah Oil and Anglo-Iranian in his portfolio. The more speculative might turn to the crude oil producers, where higher yields can be obtained. Here is a list which, it will be observed, has one notable absentee—Mexican Eagle. A political risk combined with an oil drilling risk makes Mexican Eagle shares too great a gamble:

	Fin. Year Ends.	Present Price.	Last Div. %	Est. Div. %	Gross Yield £ s. d.
Anglo-Ecuadorian £1 Stock	June 30th	41/9	10	12½	5 19 9
Lobitos £1	Dec. 31st	46/10½	12½	12½	†5 8 6
Apex (Trin.) 5/- ..	Sept. 30th	37/6	35	37½	†5 14 3
Trinidad Petroleum Development £1 ..	—	25/9	—	7½	5 16 6
V.O.C. 13/4	Dec. 31st	2 11/16	22½	22½	5 11 9

† Equivalent gross, after allowing for tax at a reduced rate.

These companies vary considerably in the character of their production. Anglo-Ecuadorian and its parent Lobitos produce a high-quality crude oil which is sold on the basis of high-grade mid-Continent prices. Venezuelan Oil Concessions produces a heavy oil sold mainly for its fuel oil content and on the basis of American fuel oil prices. Of the Trinidad companies, which turn out a crude oil with a good petrol content, Trinidad Petroleum Development has perhaps the best quality. It will be interesting to see what dividend this company will pay for its first financial year, which ended last week. The prospectus estimated earnings of about 9 per cent., and the market is expecting a maiden dividend of 7 per cent. or 7½ per cent. The output of all the Trinidad companies was temporarily affected by the recent strike, and no doubt an increase in wages will have to be paid, but I regard the outlook for Trinidad Petroleum Development, which has proved a new oilfield since the public issue of shares was made, and has still a considerable reserve acreage to exploit, as sufficiently promising to justify a purchase of the shares for investment.

* * *

From the investment standpoint the amendments which the Government propose to make in the Films Act are of importance only in that they will tend on the whole to strengthen the position of the large circuits *vis à vis* the small, "independent" exhibitor. Production of feature films in this country remains a form of enterprise much too speculative and insecurely based to be appropriate for the individual investor of moderate means; but, in so far as the cost test will probably reduce the number of British films available for exhibitors' quota purposes, the small exhibitor

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will be hit, and the circuit companies, with their larger resources, will be better able to "skim the cream" off the supply of home-made films possessing some box-office attraction. A circuit which is doing well is the Associated British Picture Corporation. Its production subsidiaries are not on an ambitious scale and have avoided losses, though their profits seem to be unimportant. From exhibiting its gross earnings have risen to £1,265,829, as compared with £926,483 last year and £656,725 in 1934-35. After providing for taxes, prior charges and £175,000 (against £150,000) for depreciation, there remains £603,144 (against £393,851) earned for the ordinary shares—an earnings ratio of 49 per cent. A further £375,000 is added to general reserve, which is now 100 per cent. of the issued equity, and the dividend is stepped up from 12½ to 18 per cent. The 5s. ordinary shares, standing at fractionally over 15s., yield just under 6 per cent. and do not seem over-valued, though investors should not forget that building of cinemas is bringing the exhibiting branch of the industry rapidly towards saturation point. It is to be hoped that, at the annual meeting, the chairman will elucidate the position of the holding which A.B.P. acquired last year in the Metropolis and Bradford Trust, whose voting shares (owned by the Ostrers) control the less happily placed Gaumont-British concern. So far as is known, the relations of A.B.P. with Gaumont-British still remain in a deadlock. From the point of view of A.B.P. shareholders, however, the amount of the investment at stake is considerable, and Mr. John Maxwell will certainly be pressed to give a full and frank exposition of the situation.

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